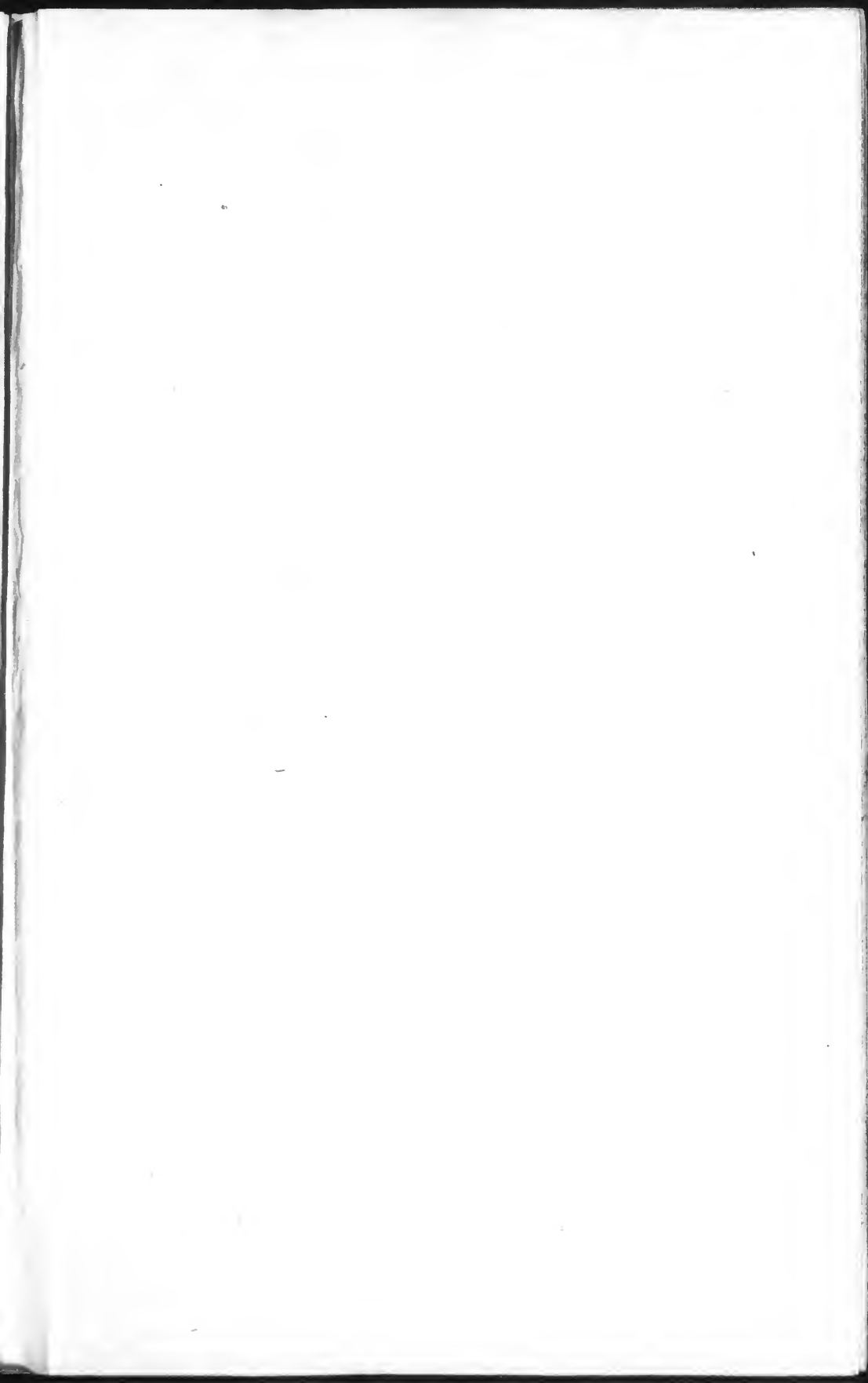


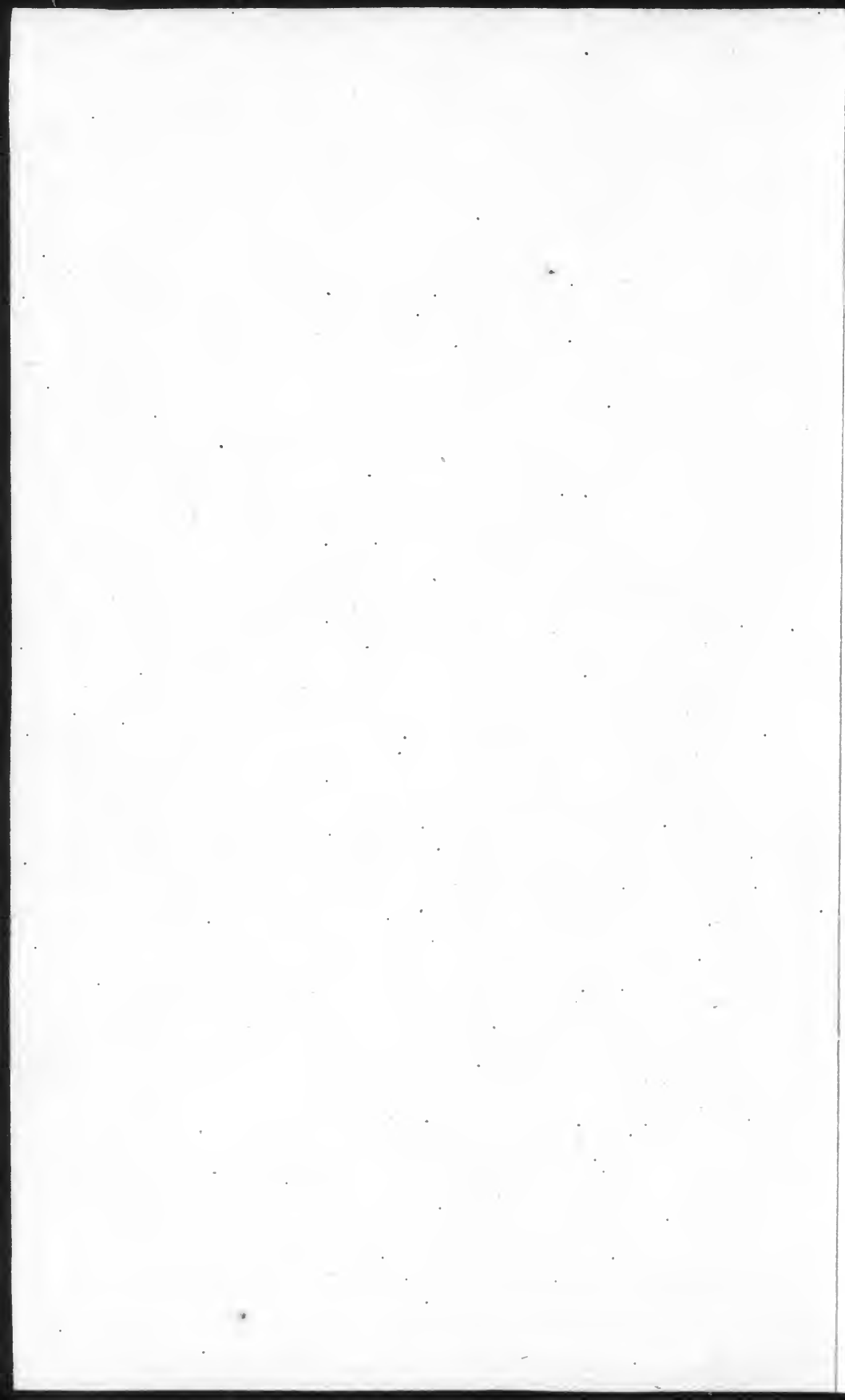
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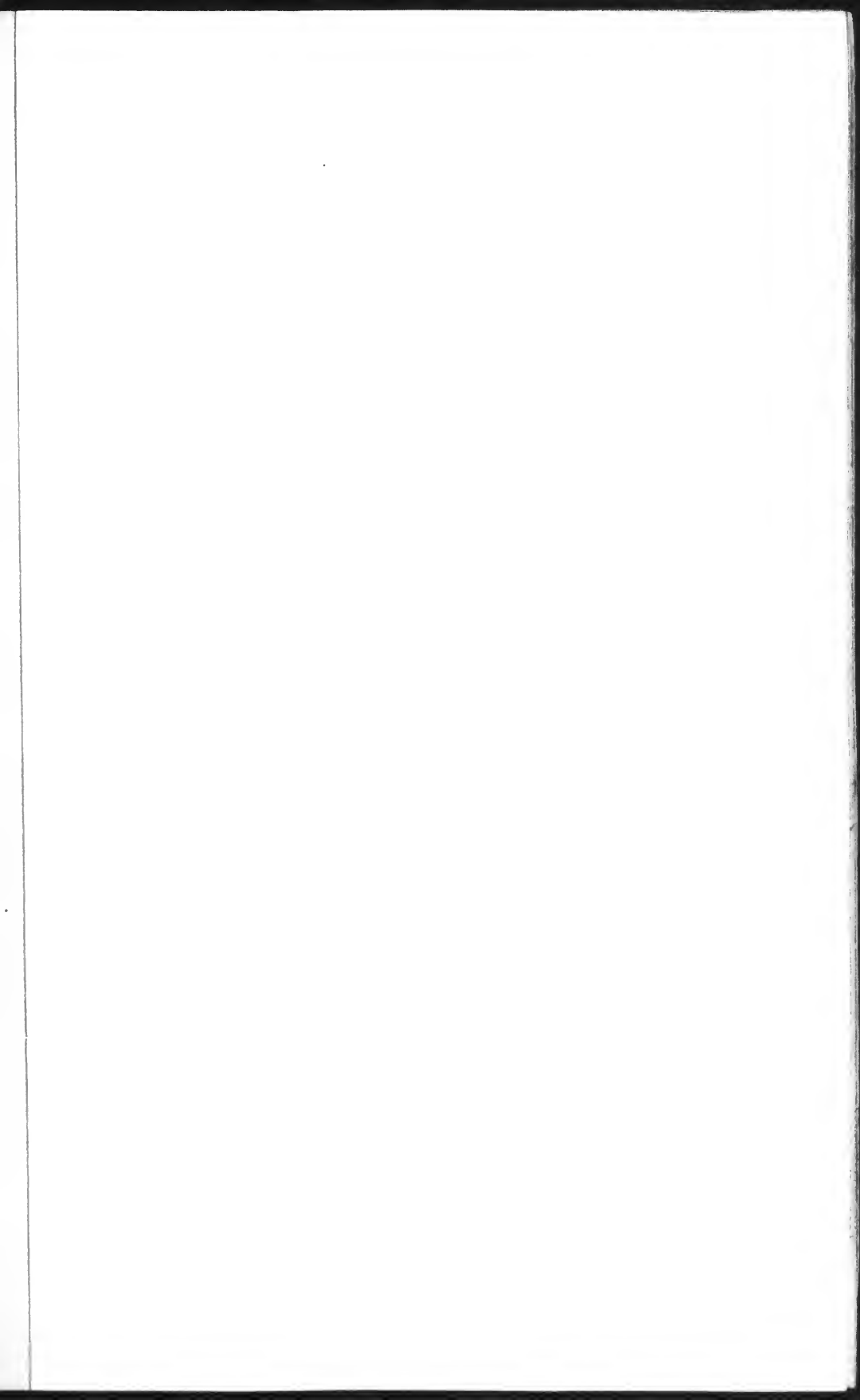
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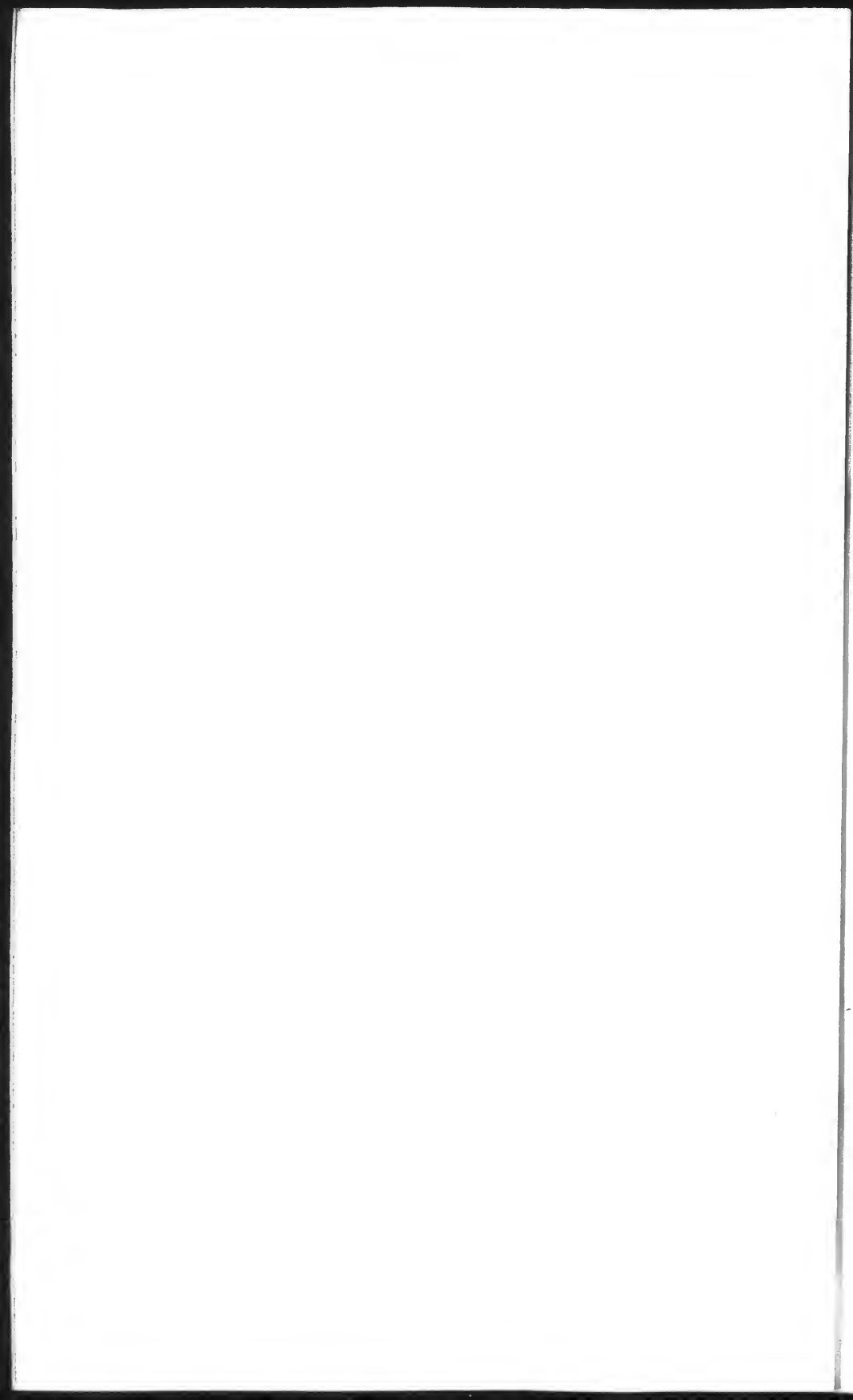


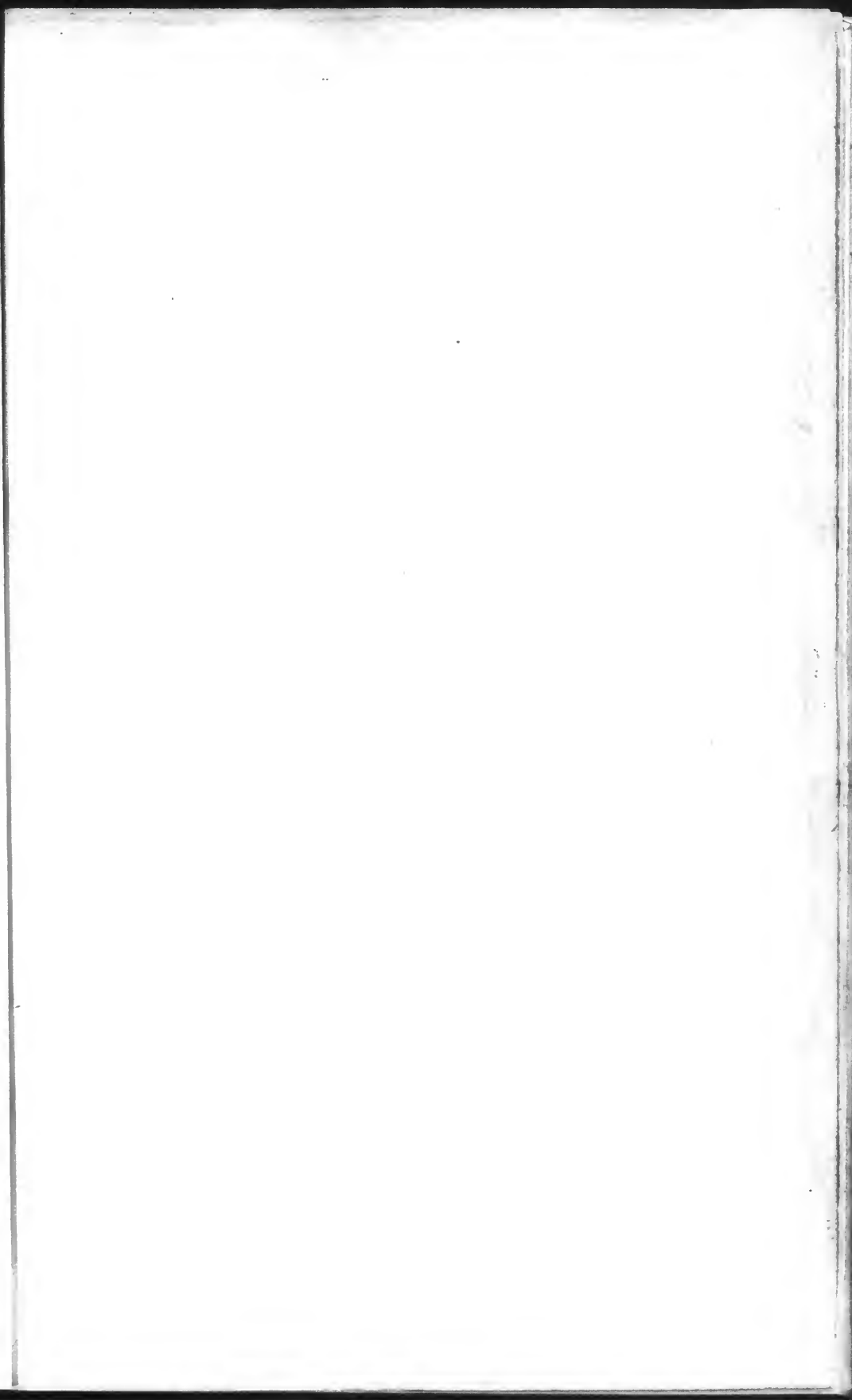














Engraved by Woodland

Wishing you every blessing  
I am dear Sir,  
your affl. Servt,  
A. Milham

1873

THE ALEXANDER KATHOLIC

THE ALEXANDER KATHOLIC

THE ALEXANDER KATHOLIC

THE ALEXANDER KATHOLIC

THE ALEXANDER KATHOLIC



Wishing you every blessing  
I am dear Sir,  
your affl Servt,  
A - Milham





*another copy*  
*written by*  
*Rev. J. W. Downham*  
**L I F E**

**OF THE**

**REV. ALEXANDER KILHAM,**

**FORMERLY**

**A PREACHER UNDER THE REV. J. WESLEY;**

**AND**

**ONE OF THE FOUNDERS**

**OF**

**THE METHODIST NEW CONNEXION**

**IN THE YEAR 1797.**

**INCLUDING A**

**FULL ACCOUNT OF THE DISPUTES**

**WHICH**

**OCCASIONED THE SEPARATION.**

*By John W. Downham*  
"What I have done in regard to the Methodist Connexion, I rejoice in at this moment. \* \* \* Oh, that I had done it more faithfully!"

**MR. KILHAM'S DYING DECLARATION.**

**LONDON:**

**PUBLISHED BY R. GROOMBRIDGE, PATERNOSTER-ROW;**

**AND AT**

**THE METHODIST NEW CONNEXION BOOK ROOM,  
MANCHESTER.**

**1838.**



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NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE:

PRINTED BY J. B. FALCONAR AND CO., PILGRIM STREET.

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## PREFACE.

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Within a year after the death of Mr. Kilham, an account of his life was published, with a Preface, signed by the Rev. J. Grundell and Mr. R. Hall, President and Secretary of the Methodist New Connexion second Annual Conference, held at Nottingham, in June, 1799. The volume consisted chiefly of extracts from Mr. Kilham's diary, and contained but little information of a definite character respecting the division which had recently occurred in the Methodist Connexion, in which Mr. Kilham had been principally engaged. This omission of details may be accounted for by the disputes, and the part Mr. Kilham had taken therein, being so well known, that it was considered unnecessary to repeat them at the time. But when a new generation had grown up in Methodism, who had not been partakers in the controversy, and the associates of Mr. Kilham had mostly followed him to their "long home," the case was different; and a want was felt, which his published Life was not calculated to supply. A new Biography, containing a fuller statement of his public conduct, became therefore desirable, for the sake of others. It was also due to his character; for the scanty memorial referred to, did justice neither to his talents nor his labours, which were only spoken of in general terms; so that, after he ceased to have living oral witnesses of what he had done and suffered, there was danger of those peculiarities being entirely forgotten by which he was distinguished from other preachers.

Many years ago, the writer of this volume became sensible that Mr. Kilham did not occupy that position

in the estimation of the christian public, which the important services he had rendered in the cause of religious liberty ought to have secured for him ; which was only to be attributed to the meagre account of him which had been furnished to the world. This suggested the idea of compiling the new Life which is now presented to the public, and more particularly to the members and friends of the Methodist New Connexion.

In regard to the assistance of which the author has availed himself in the performance of his task, he may state, that the former memoir of Mr. Kilham, his published writings, together with contemporaneous circulars and pamphlets, from various sources, have been made considerable use of ; but in addition to these, many original documents have been procured, which give to the present work an authority and value far beyond what would otherwise have belonged to it.

The kindness of the Rev. Saml. Hulme obtained for the author, from the widow of the late Mr. James Harrop, of Ashton-under-Lyne, the MSS. which he left as Secretary of a Corresponding Association, which was formed by the Methodists in the district around Manchester, for the purpose of diffusing their opinions, during the years 1795-6, and 7. These records threw much light on many proceedings which he had but very imperfectly understood before. About seven years ago, Mrs. Biller, Mr. Kilham's daughter, being in England on a visit from Russia, (see note, page 111,) and learning that a new Life of her father was contemplated, she placed in the hands of the author the pamphlets of Mr. Kilham, and also those which he had collected, several of them containing his own observations written in the margin. These were found of much service, as they brought the writer into contact with Mr. Kilham's mind, when the publications in question were

written, and, in some instances, with his views on certain points, as modified by subsequent events.

But the most important materials which have been used in the preparation of Mr. Kilham's Life, have been the voluminous correspondence, consisting of many hundreds of letters, which passed between himself and his contemporaries; also his unpublished MSS., which had been preserved by Mrs. Kilham, and, at her death, (see note, page 386,) in pursuance of her last will, sent to Mrs. Biller, St. Petersburg, who, at the request of the author, transmitted them to him, to be appropriated as he might think fit, in illustration of her father's Biography.

Thus favoured with ample means for arriving at the truth, respecting many occurrences connected with Methodistical disputes prior to 1797, and their connection with Mr. Kilham and others, it is not too much for the author to assume that he has been enabled, in this volume, to present more correct views of the subject than had previously been given. He has spared no expense of time and labour to acquire a full knowledge of every incident which he has related; and not a single fact has been introduced, as such, without taking due care to have what was to his mind a sufficient voucher; and being thus satisfied, he should have felt it to have been a breach of trust on his part, had he not brought every thing forward which he judged necessary to give the public just ideas, both of the character and proceedings of Mr. Kilham, and of those with whom his name and sufferings must ever be associated. It is the paramount duty of an historian to be faithful; and the writer of these memoirs believes he can, if expedient, produce abundant evidence to prove that he has not been unmindful of this obligation.

Besides a more complete account of Mr. Kilham's

life, the present volume contains the only portrait of him which can be considered as an authentic likeness. The engraving which was published many years ago, in the Magazine, having been understood to be from a drawing taken immediately after death, it has never been received as a correct delineation of his living features; and his friends and followers have often regretted that there should be no representation of him which could be confided in as genuine. For this no remedy was expected, particularly when forty years had nearly elapsed; but on opening the letters received from Mrs. Biller, one from Mr. Heamer, of Manchester, was found to have the impression of a portrait of Mr. Kilham on the first half of the sheet, and on the other, Mr. Heamer had written to Mr. Kilham on different topics. The letter is dated Sept. 26, 1797. In reference to the portrait, Mr. Heamer says, — “The inclosed print is from a plate which is at your service, to be sent wherever you please to order it, by your good friend Slack [an engraver in Manchester]; or you may have them taken off here, if you choose it,” &c. Though an engraving of his portrait had thus been furnished without his knowledge, and at no cost to himself, it is not improbable that Mr. Kilham hesitated as to its publication, since vanity might have been laid to his charge as the motive; — the matter was therefore, in all likelihood, deferred, and the letter, with the likeness, being folded up, remained in that state until Mr. Kilham’s papers were examined with a view to this work; when the portrait was discovered from which our engraving has been made,—and, we feel assured, it will not be the less acceptable from the extraordinary circumstances under which it was obtained.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, November, 1837.

*John A. Hall*

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# LIFE OF THE REV. A. KILHAM.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY—ON THE STATE OF METHODISM AT THE DEATH OF MR. WESLEY, IN 1791.

THE biographical account, to which this essay is intended to form an introductory chapter, has been suggested by two considerations, which seem to warrant, if not to require, such a publication. First,—Mr. Kilham having been frequently mentioned, and oftener alluded to, in connexion with disputes which have recently engaged the attention of the Methodists, much curiosity respecting his personal history has naturally been excited, which it appeared proper to satisfy, especially as occasion would, at the same time, be furnished for doing justice, in some measure, to the memory of one whose character and motives, in consequence of being widely misrepresented and aspersed, had long lain under the ban of a great majority of persons belonging to the Methodist Societies. Almost forty years have elapsed since the death of Mr. Kilham; and during that period nearly all his contemporaries, whether friends or adversaries, have likewise, in the course of nature, descended to the grave. With these changes, many personal animosities, which unhappily existed during his life, have become forgotten; and the opportunity is now afforded of estimating his proceedings dispassionately, and more in accordance with truth than could be done so long as prejudices on the one hand, and partialities on the other, influenced the minds, and warped the judgments, of those acquainted with him, or who were in any way interested in his case. If his

admirers do not recognise a perfect example—a super-human being, in the following pages, others, it is confidently believed, who knew him only by means of coloured or falsified statements respecting the part he took in the discussions previous to 1797, will meet with excellencies and worth, not to mention intellectual ability, which they had been unaccustomed to associate with his name.

A second inducement with the author, to write this volume, has arisen from the fact, that the essential principles of government which Mr. Kilham advocated, and which lie at the foundation of the community (the Methodist New Connexion) in the establishment of which he was chiefly engaged, have, within the last few years, begun to receive great attention, and to be felt to have an important connexion with the well-being, peace, and prosperity of religious, as well as of civil society. The mind of the Christian public having become thus elevated to an esteem for the individual who, at a period when the subject was less understood, and less popular than at the present day, fearlessly asserted and nobly advocated the rights of the laity, and may almost be said to have fallen a martyr in their cause, it seemed expedient to introduce him, and the doctrines on church polity which he inculcated, and with which he will ever be identified amongst the Methodists, more fully to the view of all classes belonging to that body; more especially to those who had been, through misinformation, so unfavourably biassed, as to be rendered nearly incapable of judging correctly of either.

A passing glance at the history of the world and of the church, will shew that in all ages reformers of abuses have generally been ill-requited by the people of their own generation. Many persons are so insensible to existing defects and their consequences, that they cannot perceive the necessity of interfering with established institutions, even for the purpose of improving them; and many more who see, have not the moral courage to avow their convictions, and to advocate and stand by what they believe, and privately acknowledge, to be a righteous cause. Besides these, others are

found, apparently of a more champion-like spirit; but who, after an early, and sometimes intemperate, denunciation of existing evils, are induced by sinister considerations to repudiate their own professed principles; and those with whom they had, perhaps, for a season, co-operated in the work of reformation, are forsaken or betrayed in the hour of trial. The latter description of persons are often the most clamorous for justice, and, while in the camp, full of courage even to overflowing; but on the appearance of an enemy, and while quitting their quarters for the contest, they are beset with faint-heartedness; and, unmindful of their former protestations, are led to seek a dishonourable safety by flight, or to make a cowardly surrender at discretion. Kilham had bitter experience of this nature, as will be seen more fully in the course of this memoir; but his was not a singular case, the same having happened, almost invariably, to all his predecessors in similar undertakings. When men commence war against existing systems, however absurd they may be in principle, or unjust in operation, it should be calculated, on putting on their armour, that whatever honours or rewards may ultimately await them, temporary obloquy from the partizans of abuses, and abandonment and betrayal by timid or professed friends, will be experienced during the struggle. This remark applies not only to political and mercenary interests, where the agency of merely worldly men is concerned, and the meaner passions of human nature are excited, but in connexion with the church likewise; and while contending for the doctrines and discipline of the Christian faith, it is too commonly found that personal considerations, for a while at least, overbalance the love of truth, and that rather than make sacrifices or suffer reproach, individuals are tempted to relinquish principles which their judgments approve, and to which, if they could retain them without cost, they would cleave to the end of life.

Although Mr. Kilham died in his 37th year, the period of his ministry, which began in 1784, and ended with his last short illness and death in 1798, was one of the

most important in the history of Methodism. It included a few of the latter years of Mr. Wesley's life, which terminated early in 1791; and a few years subsequent to that event, when a series of controversies, relating to ecclesiastical power and authority, and other subordinate points, agitated the whole Methodist community. As these controversies hold a prominence in the history of Mr. Kilham's life, it may enable the general reader better to judge of their nature and expediency, if we take a rapid survey of the state and economy of Methodism at the period of Mr. Wesley's death. Such a sketch is not only chronologically in order, but will greatly disencumber the biographical portion of the present volume, as well as render it in many parts more intelligible and interesting to the public.

The history of Methodism, from its commencement in 1738, to 1797, when the separation occurred, may be divided into three epochs. The *first* includes the short period when Mr. Wesley's labours were regarded by himself as merely auxiliary in promoting the cause of piety and religion generally; and when, *as a system*, Methodism had no distinctive character, nor even existence. The *second*, from the time when Mr. Wesley began to hold conferences, and, by particular rules, to govern the Methodist body as its sole head, until his death in 1791. The *third*, from 1791 to 1797. During these six years, Mr. Wesley's authority over the Connexion was exercised by the preachers solely, who formed themselves into an aristocratical government; and, after various disputes with the societies, the celebrated articles of pacification which were given to the Wesleyan people proving unsatisfactory to a great number of members, the Methodist New Connexion was established by about five thousand individuals;—who objected to all plans of government, except that one which had for its foundation-principle the union of the people with the preachers in all legislative enactments, as well as in the practical management of the entire system. This division of periods would, however, extend the present chapter to a great length: it may, therefore, be most

convenient not to preserve the formal arrangement just stated, but to throw together, without particular regard to dates, such facts and observations as will most effectually illustrate the events so fully identified with Mr. Kilham's life.

Several late writers on Methodism appear in their reasonings to assume, though in some instances professing the contrary, that Mr. Wesley originally intended to found a new sect, to be governed according to rules previously digested and determined upon by himself; and that consequently the whole Wesleyan economy was settled from an early period, if not from the very beginning. This supposition is, however, entirely erroneous, and has led many astray in their judgment respecting the primary views and purposes of the father of Methodism. So far from having been preconcerted, the plan was formed by degrees, and in the urgency of separate and successive circumstances. Mr. Wesley neither looked forward to, nor made remote calculations respecting, the ultimate workings of particular regulations, which, because of some present emergency, were requisite to be adopted at the time determined upon. He justified himself then, and indeed he will be justified by posterity in what he did, by the fact, that each measure was needed to remedy some existing evil, or to secure some immediate benefit. It is emphatically true, that Mr. Wesley simply went about doing good, and lived, and preached, and legislated day by day, and under the momentary pressure of the wants of the people for whom he acted. If this be borne in mind, and it is especially desirable that it should be, this apostolic man will be cleared of all imputation of having had the least intention, originally, of founding a system, which, by reason of its defective principles, or partial character, would, in time, interfere with the rights and liberties of any class of persons whatsoever. The form and individuality of Methodism were not foreseen, and therefore it was impossible to exercise that precaution in defining and securing different interests which might rise up in the course of time, and which there is no doubt would have been equally



protected, had Mr. Wesley, in the early part of his course especially, anticipated the extraordinary results of his itinerant labours.

Properly speaking, then, Mr Wesley, at first, had no particular plan, if by that is understood a defined method of proceeding, not to be departed from, nor changed and modified as new circumstances might arise. And in this he resembled the Apostles, who, being commissioned by their divine master, went forth to preach the gospel every-where, without being fettered by fixed rules of action, which in the infancy of Christianity might have hindered rather than promoted the cause of Christ. Like these Apostles, Mr. Wesley had an object—the diffusion of religious knowledge, and the conversion of men; and a motive, arising from the love of God in his own heart: but plan, according to the precise idea usually affixed to that term, he had none. Indeed, his course was apparently so irregular, that some who could not appreciate his aim, when they saw him running here and there, adopting, or relinquishing at pleasure, one expedient after another, and using or throwing aside, as might suit him, every instrument which fell in his way—accused him of fickleness, inconsistency, and even of madness.

In proof of what has been said, Mr. Wesley himself has left on record abundant evidence, part of which it may be well to cite. In his “Plain Account of the People called Methodists,” given in a letter written in 1748 to the Reverend V. Perronet, vicar of Shoreham, Kent, who, it seems, had applied for information on the subject, Mr. Wesley states, in behalf of himself and those who laboured with him in the beginning—“I must first premise, that as they had not the least expectation, at first, of any thing like what has since followed, so they had no previous design or plan at all; but every thing arose just as the occasion offered. They saw or they felt some impending or pressing evil, or some good end necessary to be pursued. And many times they fell, unawares, on the very thing which secured the good, or removed the evil.”\* Again, he says,

\* Works, Vol. VIII. p. 248.

in the same letter, "About two years ago, my brother and I were desired to preach in many parts of London. We had no view therein, but, so far as we were able, to convince those who would hear what true Christianity was, and to persuade them to embrace it."\* We have here Mr. Wesley's express assurance, exactly in point, from which it is clear that neither himself, nor those with whom he originally acted, looked beyond the existing circumstances and wants of the people to whom they preached. It would be easy to quote many passages from his works in corroboration of this, but as the words just given are so conclusive, a multiplicity of similar declarations must be unnecessary.

The object of Mr. Wesley was to promote the interests of the Establishment, to which he was strongly attached, by drawing persons within her walls, and bringing more prominently forward than the generality of the clergy of that period were in the habit of doing, the evangelical doctrines of repentance, faith, and personal holiness, as recognised and taught in the thirty-nine articles. Mr. Wesley had at the time no ulterior purpose different from this, as appears from the answer to the third question in the large minutes, which, with the question itself, we find given in these words:—  
 "Q. What may we reasonably believe to be God's design in raising up the Preachers called Methodists?  
 A. Not to form any new sect; but to reform the nation, particularly the Church; and to spread scriptural holiness over the land."† This was the one object which was held in view, and its accomplishment engrossed the entire attention and energies of Mr. Wesley. While others foresaw and foretold that the tendency of these irregular proceedings, as they were termed, was to establish a sect, he seems to have entered into no such speculations, nor to have been troubled by any apprehensions of the kind. If he had, the effect probably would have been to have stopped him in his course; for his attachment to the Church was so great, that he could not, at that time at least, have endured the idea of promoting a rival interest. A new sect was, it is

\* Works, Vol. VIII. p. 248.      † Ibid. p. 299.

true, the consequence of this preaching; but it is equally true, that Mr. Wesley had no such design before he began it.

Methodist *Societies* had their origin in a circumstance of apparently accidental character, and which Mr. Wesley explains as follows, in his tract entitled "A Plain Account," &c. which has just been referred to:—"Many of those who heard this began to cry out that we brought 'strange things to their ears;' that this was doctrine which they never heard before, or at least never regarded. They 'searched the Scriptures, whether these things were so,' and acknowledged 'the truth as it is in Jesus.' Their hearts also were influenced as well as their understandings, and they determined to follow 'Jesus Christ, and him crucified.' Immediately they were surrounded with difficulties;—all the world rose up against them; neighbours, strangers, acquaintance, relations, friends, began to cry out amain, 'Be not righteous over much; why shouldst thou destroy thyself?' Let not 'much religion make thee mad.' One, and another, and another came to us, asking, what they should do, being distressed on every side; as every one strove to weaken, and none to strengthen their hands in God. We advised them, 'Strengthen you one another. Talk together as often as you can. And pray earnestly with and for one another, that you may 'endure to the end, and be saved.' Against this advice we presumed there could be no objection; as being grounded on the plainest reason, and on so many scriptures both of the Old Testament and New, that it would be tedious to recite them. They said, 'But we want you likewise to talk with us often, to direct and quicken us in our way, to give us the advices which you well know we need, and to pray with us, as well as for us.' I asked, which of you desire this? Let me know your names and places of abode. They did so. But I soon found they were too many for me to talk with severally so often as they wanted it. So I told them, 'If you will all of you come together every Thursday, in the evening, I will gladly spend some time with you in prayer, and give

you the best advice I can.' Thus arose, without any previous design on either side, what was afterwards called *a Society*; a very innocent name, and very common in London, for any number of people associating themselves together."\* In another place, having given some account of field preaching, he says, speaking of those who heard him,—“More and more of them were cut to the heart, and came to me all in tears, inquiring, with the utmost eagerness, what they must do to be saved. I said, ‘If all of you will meet on Thursday evening, I will advise you as well as I can.’ The first evening about twelve persons came; the next week, thirty or forty. When they were increased to about an hundred, I took down their names and places of abode, intending, as often as it was convenient, to call upon them at their own houses. Thus, without any previous plan or design, began the Methodist society in England,—a company of people associating together, to help each other to work out their own salvation. The next spring we were invited to Bristol and Kingswood; where, likewise, societies were quickly formed. The year following we went to Newcastle upon Tyne, and preached to all the colliers and keelmen round it. In 1744, we went through Cornwall, as far as Sennan, near the Land’s End; and, in the compass of two or three years more, to almost every part of England. Some time after, we were desired to go over to Ireland; and, in process of time, to every county therein. Last of all, we were invited to Musselburg, Glasgow, and several other parts of Scotland. But it was in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, Arbroath, and Aberdeen, that we saw the greatest fruit of our labour. Such was the rise, and such has been the progress, of Methodism, from the beginning to the present time.”† When Mr. Wesley formed his first society, he had no intention that the persons united in this respect should be regarded as his followers; nor were their particular religious sentiments at all enquired into—the only qualification being, a desire to serve God. Hence, when he first founded societies in different

\* Works, Vol. VIII. p. 249.

† Ibid. Vol. VII. p. 423.

places, he accepted persons of different persuasions as members of his community, without desiring them to leave the places of worship they had formerly attended. This plan was productive of the happiest consequences. A multitude of churchmen, and very many dissenters, gave him the right hand of fellowship; and continued still in connection with their own communities. To use the words of Mr. Wesley, in the *Arminian Magazine* for 1790, "the Churchman might go to church still; the Presbyterian, Anabaptist, Quaker, might still retain their old opinions, and attend their own congregations. The having a real desire to flee from the wrath to come, was the only condition required of them. Whosoever, therefore, feared God and worked righteousness, was qualified for this society." In his discourse preached on the subject of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, and published in his Works, Mr. Wesley repeats the same thing; and there can be no question of his having always acted up to it, or that his hearers and members consisted of persons otherwise belonging to nearly all the existing denominations of that day. This will probably account for the term Methodist having been originally applied generally, and without particular regard to sect, to individuals who were more decided in their profession of religion, and whose life and morals were stricter than ordinary. The natural course of things, however, was, that those who were thus brought together from various quarters, and who held a great diversity of opinions, should become in time more fully amalgamated and identified both in their doctrinal views and mode of worship; and so it happened by degrees. The Calvinists united and became a distinct body under the Rev. George Whitfield; and those who remained with Mr. Wesley generally professed Arminian principles; and all the ordinances of the Gospel having become gradually established amongst them, the church, and other parties to which many members had formerly belonged, were seceded from step by step, and Methodism was at length not so much the distinctive characteristic of persons of various sects, as the designation

of an individual christian body? As established by Mr. Wesley, Methodism closely resembled the Bible Society in principle,—requiring no person, on becoming one of its members, to relinquish on that account his former religious connexions; and it appears to have been designed by its founder as a middle link between all Christian parties, drawing them nearer together by uniting them all in the interests of experimental religion and scriptural holiness.

The same remark applies precisely to *Class Meetings*, which constitute a most distinguishing part of Methodist discipline. So far from being first devised, and afterwards established, it was not until weekly interviews had been arranged for a secular purpose, that their utility as a means of grace ever occurred to the mind of Mr. Wesley. His own account of their origin is the best that can be given, and it corroborates what has been said respecting their commencement. After mentioning the inconvenience, or rather the impossibility, of a preacher properly watching individually over the persons who were united in society, and the occasional scandal brought upon the cause of religion by the misconduct of some who were disorderly in their habits, he adds,—“At length, while we were thinking of quite another thing, we struck upon a method for which we have cause to bless God ever since. I was talking with several of the society in Bristol concerning the means of paying the debts there, when one stood up and said, ‘Let every member of the society give a penny a week till all are paid.’ Another answered, ‘But many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it.’ ‘Then,’ said he, ‘put eleven of the poorest with me; and if they can give any thing, well: I will call on them weekly; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbours weekly; receive what they give, and make up what is wanting.’ It was done. In a while, some of these informed me, they found such and such an one did not live as he ought. It struck me immediately, ‘This is the thing; the very thing we have wanted so long.’ I called together all the leaders of the classes,

(so we used to term them and their companies,) and desired that each would make a particular enquiry into the behaviour of those whom he saw weekly. They did so. Many disorderly walkers were detected. Some turned from the evil of their ways. Some were put away from us. Many saw it with fear, and rejoiced unto God with reverence. As soon as possible, the same method was used in London and all other places. Evil men were detected, and reprov'd. They were borne with for a season. If they forsook their sins, we received them gladly; if they obstinately persisted therein, it was openly declared that they were not of us. The rest mourned and prayed for them, and yet rejoiced that, as far as in us lay, the scandal was rolled away from the society."\*

*Field-preaching*, and *Street-preaching*, to which Methodism owes so much of its early success, come under the same character as to the occasion of their commencement. They were first practised by Mr. Wesley because he had no other means left of calling sinners to repentance, having, for reasons mentioned in the subjoined passage from one of his discourses,† been prohibited from preaching in the metropolitan churches. He had recently returned from Georgia, whither he went in 1735, and on landing in England on February 7, 1738, he says, "I was now in haste to retire to Oxford, and bury myself in my beloved obscurity; but I was detained in London, week after week, by the trustees for the Colony of Georgia. In the mean time, I was continually importuned to preach in one and another church; and that not only morning, afternoon, and night, on Sunday, but on week-days also. As I was lately come from a far country, vast multitudes flocked together; but in a short time, partly because of those unwieldy crowds, partly because of my unfashionable doctrine, I was excluded from one and another church, and, at length, shut out of all! Not daring to be silent, after a short struggle between honour and

\* Works, Vol. VIII. p. 252.

† Preached on occasion of laying the foundation of City Road Chapel, April 21, 1777. See Works, Vol. VII. p. 422.

conscience, I made a virtue of necessity, and preached in the middle of Moorfields. Here were thousands upon thousands, abundantly more than any church could contain; and numbers among them, who never went to any church or place of public worship at all." Having begun this primitive and apostolic mode of preaching, the beneficial effects were too remarkable, and the will of God too clearly indicated thereby, to allow him to desist. He accordingly went forth from that time into different parts of the kingdom, preaching in churches where there were any into the pulpits of which he could gain admission; but where he found a population and no churches, or churches shut against him, he adopted the plan of addressing the multitudes in the open air. Providence led and he followed, in this as in other instances, in the way in which he could be instrumental of doing the greatest amount of good.

But the most striking evidence of Mr. Wesley having been controuled by circumstances, is perhaps to be found in his consenting to employ *Lay*, or unordained preachers. All his high church principles and prejudices were strongly opposed to this, and he found it hard to give way. It is probable, indeed, that had lay preaching been deferred until Mr. Wesley's consent had been previously obtained, his notions of episcopal order and authority would have caused him to have withstood every proposal of such a nature. Happily, he knew nothing of it until the *irregularity* had occurred, and the fact stared him in the face of a man of the name of Thomas Maxfield, unordained, and comparatively illiterate, explaining the way of salvation, and being thereby the means of the conversion of his fellow-creatures. The case standing thus, Mr. Wesley was not the individual rashly to set himself against it, merely because it did not accord with his preconceived notions of order and propriety; neither could he bring himself at once to sanction it, upon the mere evidence of its utility, until, having conversed on the subject with his pious and judicious mother, her advice and wise counsel had the effect of doing away with his opposition, and then of reconciling him to lay preaching. The words of this mother in



Israel are beautifully characteristic. In reply to her son's objections on the subject of allowing unordained persons to preach, she said, "My son, I charge you before God, beware what you do; for Thomas Maxfield is as much called to preach the gospel as ever you were."

Thomas Maxfield's preaching being acceptable, and undoubtedly the means of spiritual good to many, other lay persons were also admitted to act as teachers under Mr. Wesley's superintendence; and these became the first of as laborious and useful a class of ministers of the Gospel as any Christian church has ever been blessed with, since the days of the Apostles.

Some of these lay individuals were withdrawn from their secular business, and employed entirely in travelling through different parts of the kingdom, under the direction of Mr. Wesley: these acquired the name of Itinerant, or Circuit Preachers. Others continued at their usual occupations, and, without any expense for maintenance, went and preached at places around the neighbourhood where they resided, and were called Local Preachers.

The *erection of Chapels*, or, as they were then called, preaching houses, was a work of expediency, and when begun, the mode of investment, and the particular rights involved therein, had not been so much as considered. The inconvenience of not having a place wherein to assemble for worship being felt, a resolution was formed to begin to build, trusting to Providence for the means, without looking beyond the present moment. All that seemed to be known, was, that circumstances rendered a chapel necessary;—this constituted their governing authority, and they left it to future circumstances to determine what plans should be adopted respecting it.

In a more advanced section of this work, at a time when particular parties began respectively to prefer claims of authority over chapels, the subject, with the tenure upon which chapels are held, will come under our notice, when it will be proper to add a few observations. The commencement of chapel building is merely

introduced in this place in proof of the general position that all the institutions of Methodism had an apparently casual or circumstantial origin—that, in fact, there was no preconcerted plan, in conformity to which Mr. Wesley acted.

We may proceed to instance *Stewards*, both as to the occasion of their existence, and the manner of their appointment, which will be found to agree strictly with what has been said respecting other parts of Methodism. When Mr. Wesley began to preach in the open air, and to form societies, he had no intention whatever of having any concern with money matters, except it might be for the purpose of relieving the poor. His end was not to create a new sect, nor to adopt a plan which should render contributions from the people necessary. Hence, when the proposal of giving pecuniary aid was first mentioned to him, his honest reply will at once shew that the suggestion had never previously occupied his thoughts; and also that the office of Steward was instituted amongst the Methodists, not in conformity with any wish of Mr. Wesley's prior to that occasion, but to fulfil a particular purpose which circumstances had rendered necessary. Referring to the members of society, he states that some of them, who objected to enjoy the advantages of his preaching without cost, proposed, if not permitted to assist in maintaining him, to subscribe towards paying for the lease of a preaching house called the Foundery; and that, on this being consented to, the individual who offered to take charge of the money, and keep the accounts, became the Steward. The appointment, when it was made, was only intended for a temporary and special object; but other wants and subscriptions arising out of new circumstances, the Stewardship was continued, and became a regular part of the system. The office of Steward, as at first instituted, was of a very extensive character. As separate funds were not raised for different and specific purposes, his province was to take charge of all the moneys contributed, and to disburse them for the benefit of the cause generally, whether in the form of assisting to erect a chapel, paying

rent, furnishing the preachers with the means of subsistence, relieving the poor, or in any other way which the case required. Since then, however, the office has been greatly modified; but as we wished to notice it merely in reference to its origin, further explanation is unnecessary, enough having been said to show that, like other departments of Methodism, it was created on the suggestion, and under the controul, of circumstances.

The most important institution in Methodism is the *Annual Conference*; and its origin agrees with that of other parts of the system already mentioned. Like them, it arose from the necessity or expediency of the time. Mr. Wesley having been labouring for several years, his followers, and the opportunities for usefulness, had rapidly increased; and he beheld before him an immense field which only required cultivation, to be made to bring forth fruit an hundred-fold. His mind was strongly impressed with the responsibility of his situation; and there were many points of doctrine, as well as of christian experience, about which, too, he was deeply anxious. His opportunities for consulting with others on the means of carrying on and extending the great work which had been begun, had been only few and casual; and he felt the need of the gravest and wisest counsel that could be obtained. Under these circumstances, in 1744, he wrote to several pious and zealous clergymen, and to all whom he had employed as helpers or lay preachers, to meet him in London, that they might confer together as to the best steps to be taken for the purpose of promoting the conversion of souls. A meeting took place accordingly—and this was the first Methodist Conference. The subjects which came under consideration were those essentially connected with salvation, and with the office of the Ministry; the object of the meeting being chiefly the removal of any doubts, and the clearing of each other's views concerning justification, faith, sanctification, and other cardinal truths of the Gospel. Another conference, composed of persons similarly invited by Mr. Wesley, was held in Bristol the

following year, when some points which had been discussed at the preceding interview were reconsidered, and various other topics introduced, nearly, if not quite all of which were of a spiritual character,—the original design of these meetings being to improve and edify one another, that they might be the better fitted to labour effectually in the great work of human salvation. Secular matters were not mentioned; and legislation for the people, so far as appears from the published minutes, formed no part of the business at the first conferences. The one great concern of Mr. Wesley was to qualify himself and others as perfectly as possible for the high duties of their office, as Ministers of the Gospel; and in this only purpose every other was completely absorbed.

As these yearly interviews\* were repeated, one subject

\* Though Mr. Wesley's invitations to conference were almost wholly addressed to individuals devoted entirely to the ministry,—viz. to his own preachers, and some few of the clergy of the established church—they were not exclusively confined to them; laymen having been present, undoubtedly at Mr. Wesley's request, on some of these occasions. Dr. Hamilton, of London, for instance, and Dr. Hey, of Leeds, are said to have attended Mr. Wesley's conferences; and certainly Mr. Wm. Smith, of Newcastle upon Tyne, who married a daughter of Mrs. Wesley, and became by that union Mr. Wesley's son-in-law, was at the conference held at Leeds in 1781, and took an active part therein. This is ascertained beyond doubt, from a letter which Michael Moorhouse, an eccentric but apparently a pious and upright man, and one of Mr. Wesley's preachers, published about the year 1785, as an appeal to the public. In this address, the writer complains bitterly of ill usage, which he had experienced from his brethren in different ways. One of Mr. Moorhouse's charges of unkindness was preferred against Mr. Crook, with whom as superintendent he had been stationed in the Newcastle circuit for one year, at the Bristol conference in 1780. During this year, Mr. Moorhouse's wife died in childbed, at Newcastle, partly, as he alleges in his letter, in consequence of hard fare, and harsh treatment which she had met with from the stewards and others. The annexed is an extract:—" \* \* \* I shall pass on to Leeds conference, about five months after my wife's death. Here I mentioned before our brethren, that I thought I had not been well used by Mr. Crook; and that he had charged me with misbehaviour, that I had not 'behaved with sufficient respect to him,' &c. But Mr. Crook rose up and cried, 'I deny the fact, I deny the fact; and if any man wants my character, there is Mr. Smith.' This was a short way of getting over the chasm; although he told wilful slanderous untruths before God and 70 or 80 preachers. Mr. Smith stood up, and informed the preachers that the 'sensible people and local preachers at Sunderland said it would be much for the glory

after another was taken up, and the plan was modified and received additions according as the exigencies of the time might require, in the judgment of Mr. Wesley, who all along reserved to himself the power of deciding upon every measure, without permitting any participation therein by any one.

In reference to all the foregoing characteristics of Methodism, it will have appeared that whoever, or whatever might suggest them, the adoption of each was the act of Mr. Wesley. Nothing could be incorporated into the system against his wish, or without his consent; his approval was every thing, and his decision final. During the formation of the Methodist Societies, many irregularities were started from time to time; but whether they related to doctrines or to discipline, they were, on coming to the knowledge of Mr. Wesley,

of God if Mr. Moorhouse desisted from preaching; and with regard to what Mr. Moorhouse says concerning Mr. Crook, I believe it to be both false and foundationless.'” Whatever may have been the merits of Mr. Moorhouse's case, this account unquestionably shews that Mr. Smith was a member of the Leeds conference in 1781.

Mr. Moorhouse's letter, or “Appeal to Honest Men,” as it is entitled, —of which possibly hardly a copy but the one now before us is extant —is printed on a broad sheet, in the newspaper form, and consists of 16 columns of small type. It is, on the whole, a strange medley, yet it contains some particulars respecting early Methodism, and especially of several of the preachers and their wives, which are highly curious and amusing, as contrasted with the state of things now, when the Methodist body has acquired so great a degree of respectability. The writer was quite an original, and conceiving himself to be out of favour with Mr. Wesley, he regarded that as the cause of his being stationed in the poorer circuits; while he attributed the genteeler accommodations which were apportioned to some of his brethren and their wives as the effect of their having got into his good graces, by means of flattery. The following may be selected as one amongst a number of caricature sketches found in Mr. Moorhouse's letter:—“But tell me, ye honest men, is it right that Mr. Wesley should have all this power? To fix his flatterers, or rather let them fix themselves in the best of the circuits, where a servant is kept to wait upon the mistress, while another preacher's wife whom he does not like, (though of a far better bringing up,) may live and lodge in one room, rise and kindle her fire, clean her iron things, sick or in health; kneel down to wash her house-floor herself; while another is gone on a visit—probably an artificial pair of hips on, and her gown pieced across the rump, that it may trail as she walks along, with a large Kitty Fisher's bonnet, and her umbrella, and gives orders to ‘Nancy if it rains you must follow me with my great coat.’ No wonder that these ladies should pray for Mr. Wesley to live until he be 100 years old!”

obliged to be discontinued, and the parties who introduced or sanctioned them were required to concur in the general plan. The smallness of the work in the beginning, and its having been effected solely by Mr. Wesley, or under his guidance, will account for his power over the whole being absolute, and without responsibility to any but God only, by whom he believed himself called to the performance of this vast undertaking. As the societies multiplied, he admitted other preachers, class-leaders, and stewards to labour therein under him as he might command, but no one was allowed to participate in his authority. The uniform conditions on which those connected with him were engaged, or permitted to act, were, that they should give up their own will, and be in every thing regarding Methodism governed entirely by Mr. Wesley's directions; and these terms were applied alike to all the members and agents of the body, without exception. Nor is it conceivable that in its infancy the system could have been worked on any other principle than that of complete submission on the one hand, and of unrestricted authority on the other. A series of moral experiments were being tried upon the most neglected classes of the nation, who were generally as ignorant and brutal as heathens. When these persons became converted by the grace of God, though the change was apparent and almost miraculous as to general character, yet, being spiritual, they did not become thereby divested of their former roughness of manner, and endowed at once with those qualifications of wisdom and prudence requisite in the management of a Christian society. They had been accustomed to act independently, and to regard their superiors as entitled to obedience only in proportion as they possessed the power to coerce them, and were altogether inexperienced in rational principles of government. With such habits and feelings—which religion does not necessarily set aside in a moment, and which can only be subdued by degrees, as the mind acquires knowledge and the faculties are exercised in their new situation—they would have been unmanageable by simple rules of conduct, unless there had been

superadded the personal authority of Mr. Wesley, whom they were taught to obey implicitly, and without questioning in any way his right to the directorship.

Amongst Mr. Wesley's early followers, some who had been converted under his preaching were discovered to possess strong original powers of mind, which might be profitably turned to the service of religion. These were taken hold of and employed immediately, for there was work enough for all who could be found to do it. Though uneducated, these preachers had other qualifications, more essential at that time than human learning. Accustomed to hardships and privations, they were prepared by their habits literally to *labour* in their new vocation: their zeal knew no bounds, and this almost fitted them for martyrdom, which they narrowly escaped on many occasions; and the natural gift of eloquence which many of them possessed—and which was abundantly furnished with materials for observation by their own experience of the grace of God,—made their addresses, if homely and illiterate, far more interesting and impressive to the people amongst whom they went, than were the finished compositions of the higher class of theologians. Instead of adducing dry arguments in proof of the Christian religion, which could not have been commonly understood or appreciated, these plain men went directly to the hearts of their hearers, by standing forth as instances of the mighty change effected by the Gospel on themselves; and while they contrasted their former with their present characters, and detailed the process of their own conversion, the audience, if not instructed systematically in its theory, was made acquainted with the working of Christianity on the soul in a way which, in many cases, bore down all opposition, and by the Divine blessing was rendered extensively useful. In employing these individuals as teachers, Mr. Wesley required that in all things they should be guided by him. What else, indeed, could they have done? They had little or no knowledge of the world; and though qualified to speak of religion, because they understood and felt it, yet they were totally unfit to be left to themselves in the difficult

matters of church discipline and legislation. There were, it is true, some few of Mr. Wesley's first preachers who had better intelligence of men and things; but still even these were so much inferior to himself in every qualification for managing the body, that though they might be, and were on many occasions, consulted with advantage, their admission to exercise co-authority with himself would have endangered the uniform and profitable working of the system. And, besides, the early coadjutors of Mr. Wesley were not covetous of power, but found it easiest and most satisfactory to themselves to be directed by him, in whom they reposed entire confidence, and whose plans they regarded as maturer and better than any of their own.

These circumstances will fully account for Mr. Wesley having been originally in possession of irresponsible authority over his Societies, whether preachers or people. It was a position he was unavoidably placed in, and had he declined to act in an unlimited capacity, the Connexion would either not have been formed, or, if formed, would soon have been broken up; the materials of which it was composed being so unshapen and ill adapted to hold together of themselves, that unless they had been kept fast by his agency, dissolution, confusion, and ruin would have been inevitable. Whatever, therefore, may be thought of the propriety of Mr. Wesley having *retained* this power after the system had become established, and the preachers and members had acquired experience, there can be no question of the policy, nor even of the necessity, of his standing in the beginning invested with full and undivided authority. There is in societies as well as in individuals a state of infancy and incapacity, in which self-government cannot be exercised with advantage. Hence, if we advert to the origin of communities, we shall find the arbitrary principle to have been acted upon at first,—the ruling power being placed in the hands of individuals whom age, or conquest, or extraordinary talents had elevated to controul the rest, according to their will or caprice. As civilization advances, laws are made; and these, and not the mandates of single persons,



become paramount, and are considered as alone entitled to respect and obedience. Then, in proportion as the arts are cultivated, and political science becomes understood, official authority is further defined and restricted, and a participation, by representation or otherwise, in the work of legislation is extended through all gradations in the state, and rational liberty and good government are secured thereby to all classes. In a well-constituted family, where the paternal prerogatives are judiciously employed, we have a still more familiar illustration of the manner in which authority, absolutely exercised at first, is subsequently modified, and ultimately superceded. During nonage the parent has the entire controul of his children: while very young, they are required implicitly to follow whatever directions he may give them: but as they become educated and disciplined, the tone of authority is softened more and more, and by degrees they are raised towards an equality; until, on reaching their majority, they have conceded to them all the rights and liberty enjoyed by the parent himself,—who retains no power or influence over them, except what arises from relationship, riper years, and a sense of those kindnesses which can never be forgotten or unacknowledged by his affectionate offspring.

Legislation and government require a perfection of understanding and judgment, and a comprehensiveness and sobriety of mind, which cannot be met with in individuals very early in life, nor yet in fraternities during the first stages of their corporate existence. They must therefore, for a while, be content to be ruled by superiors, until their own faculties and experience have ripened into a fitness for taking charge of their own concerns. As soon as they are thus qualified, they become entitled, of natural right, to participate in the making and administration of all laws binding upon themselves, or having for their object their personal welfare and advantage.

However cordially Mr. Wesley might be submitted to at first, we find dissatisfaction growing up in time, and a desire manifesting itself on the part of some of his

followers to be admitted to a share of his authority. His preachers were the first to murmur; and when he was applied to, and charged with having monopolised all the powers of government to himself, he often adverted, in his own vindication, to the circumstances by which he became invested with supreme controul. His conscientious conviction appeared to be, that as it was not of his own seeking, but originally forced upon him, he had the right, and was indeed bound in duty, to retain it as long as he lived. The matter having been fully gone into by Mr. Wesley, in reply to what he understood to be the leading objections against him on this head, it may be useful to give his own paper on the subject; more especially as it clearly specifies the relationship subsisting between himself and his people, whether preachers, officers, or private members of the society. The passage is remarkable for that pointedness in speaking and writing which characterised the founder of Methodism, whose frankness of manner may be ranked as one of his many commendable qualities. The case is introduced by proposing the following question—

“What power is this which you exercise over both the Preachers and the Societies?”

To this Mr. Wesley answered at large in these words:—

“Count Zinzendorf loved to keep all things close: I love to do all things openly. I will therefore tell you all I know of the matter, taking it from the very beginning.

“In November, 1738, two or three persons who desired to ‘flee from the wrath to come,’ and then a few more, came to me in London, and desired me to advise and pray with them. I said, ‘If you will meet me on Thursday night, I will help you as well as I can.’ More and more then desired to meet with them, till they were increased to many hundreds. The case was afterwards the same at Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle, and many other parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It may be observed, the desire was on their part, not mine. My desire was, to live and die in

retirement. But I did not see that I could refuse them my help, and be guiltless before God.

“Here commenced my power; namely, a power to appoint when, and where, and how they should meet; and to remove those whose lives showed that they had not a desire ‘to flee from the wrath to come.’ And this power remained the same, whether the people meeting together were twelve, or twelve hundred, or twelve thousand.

“In a few days some of them said, ‘Sir, we will not sit under you for nothing; we will subscribe quarterly.’ I said, ‘I will have nothing; for I want nothing. My Fellowship supplies me with all I want.’ One replied, ‘Nay, but you want a hundred and fifteen pounds to pay for the lease of the Foundry; and likewise a large sum of money to put it into repair.’ On this consideration, I suffered them to subscribe. And when the society met, I asked, ‘Who will take the trouble of receiving this money, and paying it where it is needful?’ One said, ‘I will do it, and keep the account for you.’ So here was the first Steward. Afterwards, I desired one or two more to help me, as stewards, and, in process of time, a great number.

“Let it be remarked, it was I myself, not the people, who chose these stewards, and appointed to each the distinct work wherein he was to help me, as long as I desired. And herein I began to exercise another sort of power; namely, that of appointing and removing stewards.

“After some time a young man, named Thomas Maxfield, came and desired to help me as a son in the Gospel. Soon after came a second, Thomas Richards; and then a third, Thomas Westell. These severally desired to serve me as sons, and to labour when and where I should direct. Observe: these likewise desired me, not I them. But I durst not refuse their assistance. And here commenced my power, to appoint each of these when, and where, and how to labour; that is, while he chose to continue with me. For each had a power to go away when he pleased; as

I had also, to go away from them, or any of them, if I saw sufficient cause. The case continued the same when the number of preachers increased. I had just the same power still, to appoint when, and where, and how each should help me; and to tell any, (if I saw cause,) ‘I do not desire your help any longer.’ On these terms, and no other, we joined at first: on these we continue joined. But they do me no favour in being directed by me. It is true my ‘reward is with the Lord:’ but at present I have nothing from it but trouble and care; and often a burthen I scarce know how to bear.

“In 1744 I wrote to several clergymen, and to all who then served me as sons in the Gospel, desiring them to meet me in London, and to give me their advice concerning the best method of carrying on the work of God. And when their number increased, so that it was not convenient to invite them all, for several years I wrote to those with whom I desired to confer, and they only met me at London, or elsewhere: till at length I gave a general permission, which I afterwards saw cause to retract.

“Observe: I myself sent for these of my own free choice. And I sent for them to advise, not govern, me. Neither did I at any time divest myself of any part of the power above described, which the providence of God had cast upon me, without any design or choice of mine.

“What is that power? It is a power of admitting into, and excluding from, the societies under my care; of choosing and removing stewards; of receiving or not receiving helpers; of appointing them when, where, and how to help me, and of desiring any of them to confer with me when I see good. And as it was merely in obedience to the providence of God, and for the good of the people, that I at first accepted this power, which I never sought; so it is on the same consideration, not for profit, honour, or pleasure, that I use it at this day.

“But ‘several gentlemen are offended at your having so much power.’ I did not seek any part of it. But

when it was come unawares, not daring to 'bury that talent,' I used it to the best of my judgment. Yet I never was fond of it. I always did, and do now, bear it as my burden;—the burden which God lays upon me, and therefore I dare not lay it down.

"But if you can tell me any one, or any five men, to whom I may transfer this burden, who can and will do just what I do now, I will heartily thank both them and you.

"But some of our helpers say, 'This is shackling free-born Englishmen;' and demand a free Conference, that is, a meeting of all the preachers, wherein all things shall be determined by most votes. I answer, It is possible, after my death, something of this kind may take place; but not while I live. To me the preachers have engaged themselves to submit, to serve me as sons in the Gospel; but they are not thus engaged to any man or number of men besides. To me the people in general will submit; but they will not thus submit to any other.

"It is nonsense, then, to call my using this power, 'shackling free-born Englishmen.' None needs to submit to it unless he will; so that there is no shackling in the case. Every preacher and every member may leave me when he pleases. But while he chooses to stay, it is on the same terms that he joined me at first.

"'But this is making yourself a Pope.' This carries no face of truth. The Pope affirms that every Christian must do all he bids, and believe all he says, under pain of damnation. I never affirmed anything that bears any the most distant resemblance to this. All I affirm is, the preachers who chose to labour with me, choose to serve me as sons in the Gospel. And the people who chose to be under my care, choose to be so on the same terms they were at first.

"Therefore all talk of this kind is highly injurious to me, who bear the burden merely for your sake. And it is exceedingly mischievous to the people, tending to confound their understanding, and to fill their hearts with evil surmisings and unkind tempers toward me; to whom they really owe more, for taking all this load

upon me, for exercising this very power, for shackling myself in this manner, than for all my preaching put together ; because preaching twice or thrice a day is no burden to me at all ; but the care of all the preachers and all the people is a burden indeed !” \*

The preceding paper having been published in 1789, when Methodism had existed more than fifty years, and only two years before Mr. Wesley's death, it may be regarded as his final statement and exposition of the terms on which himself and his followers stood connected. He was the head of the body of Methodists, and in that capacity he claimed the entire direction of the whole community from first to last—not only during the infancy of the societies, when the converts were fresh and inexperienced, but after they had been formed for upwards of half a century. Mr. Wesley, it will be observed, adduces the following reasons or grounds for claiming the absolute and irresponsible controul of the entire connexion. 1. It had been formed by himself. 2. The government had been originally “cast” upon him, and had come into his hands “unawares.” 3. All who had become members, or entered the ministry, had covenanted to obey and serve him, as sons in the gospel. 4. He had used his authority only for the glory of God. 5. He knew of no one individual, nor even of any five persons, competent to take the management at his hands, or on whom he could devolve the government. 6, and lastly, Those who did not approve of the conditions prescribed for membership, could retire from all union with him whenever they chose to do so.

The manner in which Mr. Wesley has spoken in the preceding passage of his authority, seems to favour the notion, that by originating the body he had obtained a legitimate title to govern it absolutely, according to his own will. Now this is a doctrine to which we think we may reasonably demur ; because, in founding a church, the agent actively engaged acquires no property thereby in the persons collected together as mem-

• Works, Vol. VIII. p. 310.

bers, nor any authority over them except what strictly relates to his office as their pastor. Neither in forming a new society has he the option of instituting such terms of membership as he may please to prescribe, but must be guided in this respect, as in others regarding doctrine, by the New Testament, without superadding, of his own mere will, anything which is incompatible with its general tenor. Instead, therefore, of the circumstance of having raised up a church constituting a warrant for governing that church in whatever way the minister may think proper, he is himself bound to conform to the gospel plan, and to see that others do the same; and if any conditions of union have been established which are inconsistent with the rights of conscience or the principles of christian liberty, all of which are there laid down and guaranteed, they are of no obligation or authority whatever.

It is also equally unsatisfactory to mention as a reason for continuing to exercise supreme authority, that the prerogative was at first necessarily forced by circumstances upon the party claiming it in perpetuity; since the title to such controul always ceases to be good when the necessity which warranted its use for a season is removed. The proposition has been already laid down, that the inherent rights of men and of christians are in themselves inalienable, though they may be in temporary abeyance; just the same as during infancy it is expedient that persons and all their interests be placed under the management of others who are of mature years, and competent to act in their behalf; but as soon as the causes which created this necessity for submission on the one hand, and unlimited controul on the other, have ceased, there must be a restoration of privileges to the parties from whom they had been for a period withheld for salutary purposes. No axiom in government can be more self-evident, or of more general application, than this—viz., that authority ought to be placed where it can be exercised to the greatest content and advantage of all parties. There is also another principle, fully as true, though not perhaps so obvious, as the one just named. It is this—that with

regard to his proper rights every member of society is equally entitled to a share of power with every other member; and when this is withheld from any one for his own or the common welfare, and invested in some other, it is in the nature of a trust, to be restored to the owner wholly or in part so soon as he becomes capable of receiving and using it in a manner consistent with the general objects of the social union. To affirm, therefore, that because power happened to be necessarily placed in the hands of an individual or a party, at first, it must continue there, notwithstanding any change of circumstances, is to maintain a position as much at variance with equity and reason as it is opposed to common experience.

The third reason assigned by Mr. Wesley for retaining this authority, assumes the right to exact absolute submission as a term of union; and that this stipulation was, moreover, to be permanently binding on the part of his members and preachers—even after they had, by long standing in the church, acquired experience and discretion. Now no minister is entitled to make such a bargain for himself with individuals on their entering a christian society, or the office of a preacher of the gospel. St. Peter did not, nor did St. Paul, or the first apostles, require the fulfilment of such a condition, or in any way attempt to negotiate with those who became converted under their ministry for personal submission to themselves. All which they exacted was holy devotion in the worship and service of God, the exercise of christian charity towards each other, and a decent and orderly management of the concerns of the church. These things were required as evidences of the sincerity of their faith in Christ, and for the honour and prosperity of the cause of religion; and while they demanded nothing more, they would be satisfied with nothing less; but if these were attended to, the apostles were content—not covenanting for anything beyond what the gospel enjoined, and what was due to their common Lord and Master.

There appears, too, something ungracious in supposing



the option to depart to be an adequate remedy in case of unwillingness to submit to this authority. It is much the same as for an arbitrary government to meet its subjects, when pleading for liberty, with the offer of voluntary expatriation, as an alternative if they do not choose to be satisfied with the existing state of things. No man, and especially no christian, ought to be put to this choice. In commercial transactions, when the market is open and public, and the only principle recognized is individual convenience, it may be fair to remind persons, when objecting to any terms proposed, that they have perfect freedom to deal elsewhere; but to suppose it a parallel case, when the social feelings, church fellowship, and conscience are concerned, shows a strange inattention to the nature of things. Christian communion is appointed by God himself, as a means of professing a belief in the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ; attention to it is therefore a duty. It is, moreover, a privilege to be united to the people of God,—his churches, to whom so many promises are made, being constituted of faithful persons thus connected together in his name. This fellowship, with all its attendant benefits, is part of the inheritance which the children of God hold directly from their heavenly Father, and which they have a claim to enjoy on such terms alone as he has prescribed. No one has authority to interpose between christians and their privileges conditions of his own, and tell them if they do not think proper to be in church fellowship, or the ministry, on these terms they may depart elsewhere. This is a sort of taxing of the immunities of the new covenant for the profit of those, who, by attaching terms of their own, seek to interfere with the charter of God's people.

There is besides another view of this subject, by which, speaking generally, and in regard to its principle, the injustice of proposing a departure from a christian society as the alternative of not submitting to hard terms of communion, is made if possible still more apparent. It may be true, so far as concerned Mr. Wesley personally, who was a man of large and liberal mind, and full of charity, that those who

did not feel disposed to obey him were free to leave his society whenever they pleased to do so. Yet this step can seldom be taken without being attended with the following painful incidents. 1st. A grievous conflict of mind has to be endured before any one can be brought even to think of tearing himself from a community with which he has become united, and to which he is perhaps attached by numberless ties. 2nd. When, after a severe struggle between a sense of duty and a natural disinclination to change under such trying circumstances, he is compelled to separate—the purity of his motives is often questioned, and he is misjudged, and represented as acting under the influence of disappointed ambition, or for sinister purposes. 3rd. He is in too many instances vindictively pursued by some of the party whom he has left, and attempts are made to injure his character, and, not unfrequently, his temporal interests likewise. For there are, in almost every place, bigotted individuals, who seem as if they thought it was doing God service to traduce, and degrade, and punish with pecuniary loss, those who entertain and act upon different opinions from their own. With such a prospect before him, a person of ordinary sensibility will be disposed to endure almost any thing rather than leave the denomination in which he has so many inducements to abide, and when there are so many deterring circumstances against a removal. To represent, then, that he is at liberty to depart does not at all, under such circumstances, describe his case. The offer is plausible in words, but in reality it is a harsh alternative, involving such a number of evils, if it be embraced, that their formidable character has a tendency to throw back an individual of but common nerve, upon the determination to remain where he is, and submit to conditions which his judgment disapproves, and which, if he were really free to act, he would at once repudiate. Thus situated, the infirmities and temptations of human nature are all in favour of continuing stationary; and it requires almost a super-human degree of grace and fortitude to bring a man to a resolution to make the sacrifices, and

meet the inconveniences and losses, which such a change must necessarily draw down upon him.

It is not improbable that the retention of power on the part of Mr. Wesley, was attributable, in a great measure, to the perplexity he felt as to whom it could with safety be transferred. He knew of no one, nor even of any five persons, competent to receive it at his hands. It was believed, that had Mr. Fletcher survived Mr. Wesley, he would have been chosen to the office on account of his eminent gifts and piety; but he died several years before the founder of Methodism, and there was no one left of apparent fitness to be entrusted with the important charge. Mr. Wesley, therefore, seemed to think he had no choice, but to continue to hold the reins of government, or to relinquish them into the hands of those in whom he had not sufficient confidence, —which he did not feel disposed to do. Had there been scriptural authority, or an unavoidable necessity for the Methodist body having an individual temporal head, or a standing committee of legislation and controul, the duty, under such circumstances, would have been clear. But no such supremacy is provided for, because it is not required to be exercised in the Church, by the word of God. Instead, therefore, of lamenting that there was no single person, or five persons, to take the power at Mr. Wesley's hands, the use we make of the circumstance is this—that the power, which had most properly been invested with Mr. Wesley for a season, during the infancy of the cause, should have been given back by degrees to the members generally, and such regulations made for its exercise as would have combined both preachers and laity in the management of the general connexion. The life-time of Mr. Wesley would have been exceedingly favourable for placing the government of the body on a right foundation; and had the laity been invited to the Conference, and associated with himself and the ministers in devising means for the extension of the work of religion, those jealousies which prevailed amongst the preachers, “as to who should be the greatest” after his death, would have been mostly prevented, as well as many of the disputes which have

likewise occurred since, at various periods, respecting the arbitrary exercise of power over the people.

It is remarkable, that though Mr. Wesley foresaw, and said in express terms, that the societies would not suffer any one to rule them as he had done, yet he never adopted any plan for a proper division of authority, but left the matter entirely for future adjustment. This is much to be regretted, as his influence, had it been exerted on the subject, would have had a happy effect on all parties. But he does not seem to have been disposed to interfere with the relative position which others might assume eventually, since he had made up his mind to continue to administer the functions of government, at least nominally, during his own life.

Those who are acquainted with the character of the first societies will, it is probable, find it easier to justify the original plan of Mr. Wesley, than to concur in the above reasons which are given for continuing to exercise it permanently. So long as his sole government is represented as resting on the foundation of expediency, and made to apply to the early days of Methodism, it may be successfully vindicated; for it has been shewn that in the infancy of the connexion some such authority must necessarily have been lodged with an individual like Mr. Wesley, whose talents and acquirements over others were so supereminent, that they would be but poorly illustrated by any comparison which might be instituted between him and the most gifted amongst his followers. He was so much elevated above others, that he naturally, at first, assumed the office of appointing and ruling—or rather, he accepted it; for, as he truly says, it was “cast” upon him—because none else was qualified or willing to take such a leading part; and if he had refused also, the system, being neglected or left to incompetent persons, would have gone to destruction. There can be no doubt, therefore, that Mr. Wesley was in a manner forced to occupy the station which he did, and that his motives were of the purest character,—his only object being to promote scriptural

christianity, especially amongst the lower classes in society.

No profession of Mr. Wesley's ever deserved greater credit than that wherein he declares he had throughout acted and used his influence for the glory of God. His whole life and labours confirm the truth of this; and he will go down to posterity not only as one of the greatest and most useful men who ever lived, but as one who, in the plenitude of his authority, sought to exercise it for the salvation of souls. Mr. Wesley, however, stands alone: no other man or class of men can be expected to resemble him in disinterestedness and self-devotion to the welfare of others. It is, therefore, not in opposition to Mr. Wesley's having had great authority that objections are raised—but against a particular principle, which in the hands of any class of men, constituted as human nature is, must sooner or later work for evil rather than for good.

Mr. Wesley must also be distinguished from any successor or number of successors in another particular. He was no more to be classed with the preachers than with the private members of the society, but had alike the command of all; and his authority, though more displayed in respect of the former, could be appealed to by both parties, especially by the people, who looked directly to him for protection, when particular instances of arbitrary conduct occurred on the part of individual preachers, and had in general, such perfect confidence in his kindness and goodwill towards them, that they seemed to entertain little or no fear of being wronged so long as their privileges were in his keeping. The preachers, chiefly, were jealous and impatient of Mr. Wesley's controul, which often mortified them when exercised, as it sometimes was, to repress their ambitious aspirings; and it was in opposition to their claims and efforts to share the ruling power, that he so positively asserted his right to the entire direction and government of the connexion.

Mr. Wesley's retaining the supremacy in his own hands, operated variously on the minds of different

preachers. A majority of them, unwilling to appear to oppose him in his latter days, were disposed quietly to submit to his direction, and to await his removal to his heavenly reward, before attempting any alteration in the system. While a few others, observing a diminution in his physical and mental energies—the necessary consequence of extreme age—conceived the plan of ingratiating themselves into his favour, as a means of ruling indirectly in his name, both for present gratification and preparatory to a formal assumption of power after his decease. There was accordingly, as might be expected, a good deal of favouritism towards the latter end of Mr. Wesley's life. The societies had greatly increased, and needed attention in proportion to their augmented numbers; and the time and strength of Mr. Wesley—though he was almost a miracle for his years—being inadequate to a personal superintendence and visitation, he was necessarily obliged to take many things on report from those who had gained his confidence, (which was not always well placed,) who thus acquired authority to act in his behalf. One effect of this was, that in some instances Mr. Wesley's power, delegated to others, was made to appear more arbitrary than it would have been in his own hands. This naturally proved a source of great dissatisfaction, both in the minds of the junior and less officious preachers, and also to the more observant and intelligent of the people, which had its effect in preparing them for the conflicts which afterwards ensued.

A further occasion of discontent in many places, was the refusal to allow the Methodist Societies to have preaching in Church hours, and the ordinance of the Lord's Supper in their own Chapels. This latter was not, however, a new subject of controversy, though it was more extensively canvassed as the progress of Methodism advanced, and the congregations became settled. There had been occasional struggles for these privileges for many years before Mr. Wesley's death; and at the City Road Chapel, London, and one or two other places, a concession had been made of the Sacrament under certain restrictions; yet the cases

where it had been granted were so few, and being regarded as peculiar, and coming under the character of exceptions to the general rule, they were not allowed to be pleaded as precedents. But these grounds of refusal were not satisfactory, and there was, notwithstanding Mr. Wesley's repeated injunctions on his members to resort to the Church for the purpose of partaking of this ordinance, a growing desire, and evidently a determination in many societies, to have every ordinance of the Gospel independent of the Establishment; and the only points which seemed to be undecided were as to the most expedient method of obtaining them, and whether to strive for them at once, or wait a little longer, when a more favourable opportunity might occur. Much disputation arose out of these things, which, as it will have to be noticed hereafter, may be passed over in this place.

The preceding outlines may be sufficient to give the reader a general idea of the state of Methodism at, and for some time previous to, Mr. Wesley's death. The details of the measures taken to secure the administration of the Sacrament, with other disputed matters, and more especially of the stand made against the assumed power which the preachers asserted, of sitting alone in Conference, and being the sole legislators and governors of the Connexion, are so interwoven with the conduct of Mr. Kilham, that they will properly form part, and the most important part, of his personal history, which we now proceed to take up and narrate in the order in which the circumstances occurred.

## CHAPTER II.

MR. KILHAM'S EARLY LIFE, TO THE PERIOD WHEN HE BECAME  
A CIRCUIT PREACHER IN CONNEXION WITH THE  
REV. JOHN WESLEY IN 1785.

It is a circumstance not unworthy of notice, that both Mr. Wesley, the father of Methodism, and Alexander Kilham, one of the founders of the Methodist New Connexion, were born at Epworth,\* a small market town in Lincolnshire. Mr. Kilham, whose father's name was Simon, was born on the 10th of July, 1762; and his parents being pious members of the Methodist Society, he had the advantage of a religious education. It is recorded by Mr. Kilham, to the honour of his father and mother, and as the occasion of his most grateful recollections in after-life, that at the earliest period when he was capable of receiving instruction, they endeavoured to impress upon his mind the danger and folly of living in sin, and the happy consequences, both in the present and future world, of loving and serving God. It was their practice to take him with

\* After Mr. Kilham, by writing against the exclusive power of the preachers, and what he regarded as the abuses of Methodism, had become obnoxious to the leading individuals who governed the body, almost every thing relating to him was construed to his disadvantage. Even the circumstance of his having been born at Epworth was tauntingly mentioned; and with a sort of profane reference to the words of St. James (Chap. iii. v. 11,) this was cited as an exception to the general law in nature, that a fountain doth not "send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter." Mr. Kilham noticed this allusion in the following terms:—"Whatever may be thought by some on the subject, I consider it an honour to be born in the same town that gave birth to the Messrs. Wesley; and I hope I have been following the leadings of Divine Providence in my contracted sphere, in what I have done to bring about a redress of grievances, as the Messrs. Wesley did when they sought to reform the national church. And as they rejoiced when they were worthy to be cast out of the church, and went preaching the Gospel wherever a door opened; so I rejoice that I am counted worthy to be cast out of the conference for what I have done, and hope to preach wherever the Lord directs my way."



them to hear preaching, and afterwards to talk over the sermons, for the purpose of simplifying and adapting what they had heard to his capacity. The effects of this were, that his mind became enlightened, and his conscience tender and scrupulous even while an infant. The first distinct impression which he could remember respecting death, and eternity, and the necessity of being always prepared for the change, was occasioned by his mother calling with him, on their way to preaching, to see the corpse of a man who had been killed by lightning. This sight, and the thoughts it suggested, never became obliterated from his memory. He was likewise, while very young, much affected in overhearing several conversations on experimental religion which his father had with the Methodist preachers who came to the house.

When he was under 13 years old, Mr. Shadford,\* probably at his father's request, took an opportunity of speaking with him alone. This good man's admonitory conversation moved him to tears. His sins were brought to remembrance, and he felt that punishment from God might be justly inflicted upon him for them. In this state of mind, he made his first resolutions to live holily in future; but these were soon broken, and the solemn impressions of which he had been the

\* Mr. Shadford went out as a Circuit preacher under Mr Wesley in 1768, when he was 29 years old. He was born in Lincolnshire, not far from Epworth, in which neighbourhood several of his family lived. Before his conversion his habits had been very irregular, which led him to enlist into the militia, and while marching from place to place as a soldier, he was frequently brought under the Gospel, especially at Gainsborough, where his mind was deeply affected under a sermon by one of the Methodist preachers. Still, he was not decidedly pious until after being discharged from the army. His conversion took place in 1762. No sooner had he become a partaker of saving grace than he began to seek the salvation of others, and became the means of his parents and other individuals beginning in earnest to serve God. After travelling as a preacher a few years, on meeting with Captain Webb at the Leeds Conference, and learning from him that there was an opening for, and great need of, preachers in America, he offered his services, which being accepted, he sailed within the year. On the rupture between America and England, as he could not renounce allegiance to Great Britain, and take the United States test oath, he obtained a passport and returned home, where he resumed his station as a preacher, and laboured in that capacity for several years.

subject became partly effaced in a short time ; and from this period until his 18th year he seems to have been exceedingly unhappy, in consequence of his general conduct being so much at variance with the better convictions of his mind. He states, in a private journal which he afterwards kept, that he was guilty of undutiful conduct towards his parents, that he violated the Sabbath-day, and was moreover addicted to other wicked practices too common in youth. These practices gave his father and mother great uneasiness, and caused them to weep and lament over their son with feelings bordering upon despondency. The knowledge which he had of their distress frequently had an awakening effect upon him, and reproduced occasionally those anxieties respecting his soul which he had experienced more strongly during childhood. Referring to his eighteenth year, he says,—“About this time, a youth of 14 years of age, with whom I became acquainted, was made singularly useful to me ; and from the various conversations we had on religious subjects, I began to make serious determinations to leave off my wicked course of life, to discontinue my old companions, and to devote myself to those religious pursuits, which I was always convinced could alone make me happy. My pious companion would often talk with me on these subjects, and finding an increasing delight in his company and conversation, we began to form a useful intimacy, advising and encouraging each other to continue in search of eternal happiness. I now began to resume the neglected practice of private prayer, and frequently found much encouragement and drawings from the Lord in that exercise, which elevated my mind, and convinced me that the ways of wisdom are the only ways of pleasantness. I began to have an unusual peace and serenity of mind, which I had hitherto been a stranger to, and my hours passed cheerfully along. Not having then the privilege of hearing the Methodists, I spent as much time as my situation afforded in private duties, rising early in the morning to secure a little leisure for that purpose. My father, with several of the Methodists, seeing the

change that had taken place, embraced opportunities of speaking with me, and exhorting me to cleave to the Lord with my whole heart. He frequently conversed with me on Sunday evenings in private, and endeavoured to impress on me a due regard for my immortal soul. I opened my mind to him, but it was still with some degree of reserve; for although I was almost persuaded to be a Christian, yet, being young,

‘ The world, and its dread laugh,  
‘ Which scarce the stern philosopher can scorn,  
‘ Hung on my side,’

and I could not reconcile myself to the reproach of Christ. I felt unwilling to bear the then odious name of Methodist, and when at any time the term was applied to me, I was much ashamed of it, and endeavoured to shun the Cross.”

While in this hopeful state, a change of circumstances separated him from his excellent companion, and he was thrown amongst other associates of a widely different character, some of whom were his own relatives. At first he refused to join with them in their foolish and wicked practices, and retained his determination of devoting himself entirely to the service of God. In such company, however, his pious resolutions became weaker and weaker; and,—neglecting the wise precept, ‘ My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not,’—by continuing to associate with them, he fell, and became one with them in all their evil plans and pursuits. This relapse was a great grief to his affectionate parents, more especially because, as is generally the case when there is a return to sin, his undutifulness towards them, and his rebellions against the Almighty, were greater than before. This, too, was at a critical period in life, while his character was fast forming, and when persons, humanly speaking, acquire principles and habits which are the most permanently retained.

Before a year had passed over, since his return to Epworth, a revival of religion took place in the neighbourhood, and a circumstance occurred which, although, as he observed when repeating the relation, it might appear

to some to be trivial and undeserving of notice, had such an effect upon his mind, that he had good reason both to remember it, and to be thankful that it had happened. It was a dream which a near neighbour had, and which, if not therefore sent, was overruled for the spiritual good of several members of his own family, as well as of others to whom it was made known. Mr. Kilham was deeply wrought upon on hearing of it; and as he records, in his diary, two or three of his own dreams at subsequent periods, which seemed to have had a correspondence with what befel him soon after they respectively occurred, we may conjecture with probability that the following was the means of his paying more regard to them than people commonly do to such nocturnal impressions. Whether Mr. Kilham erred in regarding the dreams alluded to as premonitory, the reader will have the liberty of judging for himself, when they come under notice in a proper place. The circumstance before-mentioned is thus given:—"One of our neighbours who had lived in the fear of the Lord for above thirty years, had a remarkable dream. He had seven sons and daughters, all of them willing subjects of Satan's kingdom; they had often been warned by their kind father of their danger and exhorted to forsake their sins and turn to God, but it was all to no purpose till this period. He had often pleaded earnestly with God for their conversion, but prayer in their behalf appeared to him to be in vain. He dreamed that the day of judgment was come: that he saw the Judge on his 'great white Throne,' and the holy Angels seated round him, and all nations gathered before him; that he and his wife were on the right hand of the Judge,—but he could not discover any of his children. Having, however, searched, he at length found all seven together, in anguish and distress, tearing their hair and cursing the day in which they were born. When they saw him, he imagined they cried out, 'Father, we will never part more!' He thought he said, 'My dear children, I am come to see if I can get you released out of your miserable situation.' But when they came near to the

Judge, he thought he cast at them an angry look, exclaiming, 'What do thy children with thee now?—they would not take thy warnings on earth, and they shall not now share the Crown with thee.' The Judge was going to pronounce 'Depart ye cursed' on them, when the parent awoke in great consternation, heartily rejoicing that 'it was but a dream!'—A little after this, he invited all his children to his house, and with much concern related his dream to them, which had such an effect on their minds that several of them began to reform their lives and turn to God." Many others did the same, and the work of religion was considerably extended.

Mr. Kilham being of a social disposition, and somewhat compliant, he was strongly influenced in his conduct, as we have already seen, by the character and pursuits of individuals with whom he became connected. Happily, he contracted an acquaintance with several pious young men, which he found to be of great benefit. He was also emboldened to enter into serious conversation with some of his former companions in wickedness, which was not altogether thrown away upon them. They talked freely about their former proceedings, and determined to leave them off, and return to God. There was a general awakening in the Methodist society: many persons in the town were alarmed, and numbers began to forsake their evil ways, and seek the Lord with tears of repentance. Three brothers and a sister-in-law of Mr. Kilham, besides several of his late associates, began earnestly to devote themselves to the services of religion. Others were amazed at the change they saw in persons whom they had formerly known to be so averse to godliness; and though some despised and derided them, and attended their meetings for the purpose of mocking, yet others began, by the grace of God, to work out their salvation with fear and trembling; and not unfrequently those that came to ridicule, departed from the place of worship with broken and contrite hearts.

This experience, however it might denote him to be 'not far from the kingdom of God,' did not amount

to full Gospel liberty and salvation. The spirit was drawing him to the Redeemer, but as yet his ideas of the privileges of believers were very imperfect. Hence, he states how astonished he was, when he heard a number of individuals tell how happy they felt in the enjoyment of the favour of God through Christ Jesus. He had been the subject of some gracious visits from the Spirit, which humbled him, but at the same time afforded him encouragement to engage in the service of God, which was so far satisfactory; still this being only of a general character, he had yet no distinct manifestation of the Divine favour. When, therefore, he became conversant with persons who spoke of knowing their sins forgiven, of being made new creatures, and of having the love of God shed abroad in their hearts, by the Holy Ghost given unto them—and all this, too, professed not in terms without a definite signification, but in a manner which testified that they had the witness in themselves that what they said was truly so,—it was so new to Mr. Kilham, that at first the mere announcement of such things almost overpowered him with amazement. An immediate consequence of this was a keener sense of his sinfulness, with deeper humiliation before an offended God. He was invited to attend a meeting, and his own words will best describe his state at this moment:—"I was so much condemned and accused by my conscience, that I thought myself the worst of sinners. My companions surrounded me, speaking of the wonderful dealings of God with their own souls, and told me that the Lord would speedily deliver my soul, if I would return to him. I was astonished to see the change that was in them; my heart, or rather I may say the Spirit of God, smote me, and I could not refrain from weeping; there were several others also in great distress, who appeared more affected than I was; when the meeting had continued about an hour, I could not help weeping aloud as well as they. Our friends prayed with us; some of them exhorted us to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, while others were praying alone for our deliverance. I continued two

or three hours weeping without comfort, finding myself so exceedingly sinful: sometimes my heart was broken down, so that tears flowed plentifully; at other seasons I was so hard and stupid that I could not weep. After I had remained thus for three or four hours, I found a sudden change on my mind,—I could not have wept if I might have had the world for it; but I found a great love to every one around me, and my heart was filled with unspeakable joy. I did not know what had passed in me, only that my heart was changed from mourning to rejoicing; my friends rejoiced over me, exhorting me to cast myself on the mercy of God; they warned me of Satan's devices, assuring me that he would endeavour to ensnare me with doubts and fears. I returned to my father's house, where we rejoiced together for what God had done for our souls, and endeavoured to persuade all we saw to seek the same happiness;—for the change I found was attended with a desire that all might experience the same. This led me to search the Scriptures, that I might be able to persuade others to flee from the wrath to come. I had some temptations, and sometimes fears lest I should have deceived myself; but the Lord again shined upon my soul, and my doubts were gone. My peace returned with a love to God and to all mankind, such as I had never known before."

Christian experience may be genuine, although less strongly marked in the beginning than in Mr. Kilham's case; but still, in reference to a preacher's first convictions of sin, of the process of his repentance, and the manner of his obtaining the liberty of the sons of God by exercising implicit faith in the Saviour—it must be allowed that a distinct recollection of these things, and of the time, and place, and circumstances of conversion, though not an essential ministerial qualification, conduces materially to his own personal comfort, and has frequently a most important influence upon his character, and the efficiency of his subsequent labours in the Church of Christ. A minister's conversion ought not only to be sound and scriptural, but clear and undoubted; and when this is ascertained there cannot fail to be recognis-

ed, by every one, an identity and truth in all that he advances on the subject of religious experience, as well as a peculiar accuracy in his delineations of the workings of Divine Grace on the human heart. When a minister of Christ remembers the 'wormwood and the gall,' and can refer back, in his own mind, to the hour of his being himself brought out of darkness into marvellous light, besides relieving him from embarrassing anxieties respecting his own acceptance with God, and his spiritual state generally, he is thereby better qualified to explain the nature, and more zealously disposed to press upon his hearers the necessity of their being born of the spirit, in order that they may see the kingdom of heaven. He can accompany them through all their painful exercises, and, while sympathising with them, administer encouragement, by holding out the hope of the Gospel to returning penitents. In looking over some hundreds of outlines of sermons left by Mr. Kilham at his death, the writer of these memoirs admired what he would recommend Christian ministers generally to imitate, viz. a perpetual recurrence to the work of conversion, and a fulness and a justness of description of the feelings of the soul while seeking God, or under the renovating influence of the Holy Spirit. It is here that a true evangelist will be found to differ from a dry, moral, though at the same time, perhaps, an orthodox, and also an eloquent, preacher. The latter may be systematic, and even theoretically sound in doctrine; but his pulpit addresses want vitality and power, and that pure scriptural complexion and immortal freshness, which are so conspicuous in, and which constitute the chief beauty and characteristic excellence of the discourses of the former. Mr. Kilham's style of preaching probably owed much to the manner of his conversion. He remembered the great things which had been done for his own soul, and he delighted to point lost sinners to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.

In the earlier times of Methodism\* especially, no

\* This practice ought, perhaps, to be referred to a higher date than that of Methodism. In the evangelical history, we find men commencing teaching very soon after they had been themselves taught of God.



sooner did a person give evidence of his own conversion to God, than he was exhorted to begin and directed in what way to seek, the conversion of others. The first Methodists, almost to an individual, had their minds deeply impressed with that scriptural declaration, 'Truly the harvest is great and the labourers are few;' and they were led under this feeling to endeavour immediately, and with all their might, to glorify the Saviour, by a life of usefulness as well as of holiness. To this practical observance of the principle, that every one was bound to do what he could in promoting religion, may be ascribed, under God, the successful establishment and rapid progress of Methodism, in so comparatively short a time, by Mr. Wesley and his helpers, who never failed to give employment suited to the one, two, five, or ten talents of their followers. Before Mr. Wesley introduced his system of every one doing what he could for God, the learned only were considered as the instructors and officers of the church; and persons not of the clerical profession were mostly regarded as having no concern whatever with religion, beyond the salvation of their own souls. During such a state of things, the engines and emissaries of sin being so much greater in number and efficiency than the agents of the Gospel, comparatively little good was done, and vice and impiety abounded every where. It was not until Mr. Wesley was led to engage every kind of talent, and to press every species of influence into the service of the Gospel, that the singular utility of such a policy was made evident by a general revival of the work of God throughout these kingdoms. Such a system is not only valuable

See the calling of the Apostles, the conversion of Paul, &c. as recorded in the Acts. It is also a remarkable fact, and worthy of particular notice, that the improvements in the manner of modern education rest upon this principle, viz. that as soon as a person has learned any thing, he is qualified to teach what he knows, though he may not at the moment be competent to unfold the higher branches of knowledge to which he has not attained. There was much good sense, as well as philosophy, in the observation of a foreigner, who stated that he taught one of the sciences in order that he might learn it. The same is true of religion; if a person with humility, in a becoming spirit, and from proper motives, attempt to teach what he knows of it, by instructing others in this way, his own knowledge will be advanced at the same time.

as it provides a great number of active agents of religion, but also because it has proved a nursery of rich and popular ministerial talent, and a school for training for the highest usefulness in the church. The history of Methodism abounds with instances of individuals who began their official course by filling the humblest places, in which the exercises, by reacting on their own minds, furnished experience and fostered powers which, thus strengthened and matured, ultimately raised the possessor to distinguished honour and usefulness in the cause religion.

Mr. Kilham graduated in this manner. Shortly after his own conversion, he began in an humble way to exercise at private prayer meetings, and then he shortly afterwards officiated more publicly on similar occasions. This was beginning at the right end, and besides bringing down spiritual blessings on his own soul, his efforts developed his abilities, and prepared his way for serving the church in a higher station. He seems constitutionally to have been, though not of a violent, of a warm temperament; and when under the sanctifying and directing influence of religion, very zealous in the cause of his Divine Master. The measure of liberty he had enjoyed while officiating in prayer meetings, and the desire which he felt for the salvation of souls, stimulated him to embrace every opportunity of exhorting his friends and neighbours to forsake their sins, and return to God. This was preliminary to a more extended course of usefulness, the commencement of which he thus describes:—"Five or six of us were desirous of spreading the knowledge and love of Christ, and for that purpose, we formed a plan of holding meetings, for prayer and exhortation, in the neighbouring villages; the power of the Lord was present with us,—many were constrained to cry out for mercy, and there was a glorious prospect of sinners being brought to God. Thus the Lord owned our endeavours, and his name becoming exceedingly precious to many, numbers were added to our society. However, some turned back again into their former ways of sin and vanity, and I had much sorrow on their account. I endeavoured earnestly to reclaim

them, but in several cases all my attempts proved unsuccessful. Our company that attended the villages now became very small, and at last was reduced to myself and another young man, who had been in the society some years. But we still endeavoured to keep up the meetings we had begun, and the Lord blessed these to our own souls, and made them useful to others. Several friends advised us to desist from our attempts to support our meetings, and we had much exercise and trouble in our minds on that account. One Saturday evening, as we were going into the country, we had great uneasiness because of the many discouragements which were before us, and after much conversation and reasoning, and having prayed earnestly to the Lord on the subject, we seemed to rest much on the tokens we should have from God of his approbation of our conduct on the approaching Sabbath. The Lord was pleased to bless us by pouring out His spirit upon us; several were led to cry to Him for mercy; three in particular were brought to close in with the overtures of mercy; they became members of our society, and I hope happy partakers of the love of God. Our hands were lifted up like the hands of Moses, and we returned blessing and praising the God of our salvation, being resolved, by Divine help, to continue to declare to all that would attend our meeting, that Jesus Christ was the only way of salvation.

“Soon after I had joined the society, I had thoughts of preaching, and was often led to think that God would sometime call me to engage in that employment. I spent much time in praying that the Lord would make my way plain before me, promising that whatever he called me unto, to obey his voice, and follow him whithersoever he would have me, though it were to prison or to death. I frequently had passages of Scripture impressed upon my mind, such as ‘Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine;’ ‘Let no man despise thy youth;’ ‘Neither count I my life dear unto myself so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God;’

‘A dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me, and woe unto me if I preach not the gospel.’ These and many other such passages induced me to cherish the thought of being engaged in the ministry. Several of my friends, and two of the preachers in particular, said they believed God had designed me to labour in his vineyard. At my first setting out in prayer and exhortation, my zeal was not according to knowledge. I then did and said many things which a maturer judgment caused me to regret; but the Lord overlooked them with a pitying eye, and continued to bless my soul with peace and joy, and caused my heart to overflow with love to perishing sinners. Glory be given to His name for ever, for not inflicting upon me the judgments I deserved; when I grieved His holy spirit, He followed me with His loving kindness and tender mercies.

“I went out with much fear and trembling, and preached my first time at Luddington; the Lord opened my mouth and gave me favour in the sight of the people, so that I found encouragement to proceed,—for he was pleased to own my labours, by making me useful to the people and happy in my own mind.”

Within a short time after Mr. Kilham had begun to preach, Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq.,\* of Raithby Hall, near Spilsby, Lincolnshire, paid a visit to Epworth, and this led to a connexion with Mr. Kilham, which was the occasion of the latter becoming entirely

\* R. C. Brackenbury, Esq. was one of Mr. Wesley’s opulent friends and supporters; and being not only possessed of piety, but also of respectable ministerial talents, his services in the cause of Methodism were very important at that time. He was for several years regularly stationed as a circuit preacher, and to the time of his death, which occurred Aug. 10, 1819, his name stood on the minutes of Conference as a supernumerary preacher. It is to be regretted, in consequence of an injunction,—dictated by extreme humility, and laid upon his surviving friends during his last illness,—that nothing should be written or published respecting him after his death, that the christian world is precluded from knowing more of this exemplary and useful man. Something of the heavenliness of his temper and character may be inferred from a treatise on the “Holy Angels,” which was printed at Sheffield, in 1826, under the superintendence of J. Montgomery, Esq., at the charge of his venerable and pious widow, for gratuitous distribution. This

set apart as a minister of the Gospel. At the time Mr. Brackenbury visited Epworth, he was as much devoted to the work of the ministry as his circumstances and imperfect health permitted; and that he might be the means of greater usefulness, he wished to engage, at his own expense, a young man of the Methodist society, possessing promising talents as a preacher, to travel with him when itinerating for the purpose of spreading the Gospel. This was in 1783, when Mr. Kilham was twenty-one years of age. Mr. Brackenbury seems to have made known this intention, accompanied by enquiries for a proper person, in different places where he had gone to preach; and the matter having been mentioned at Epworth, some individuals there (not of Mr. Kilham's family, for his parents were at first unwilling that he should leave home,) having formed a good opinion both of his piety and abilities, urged him to offer himself to travel with Mr. Brackenbury. Mr. Kilham, whose mind had previously been impressed with the thoughts of entering the ministry, regarded this as a providential call; and having at length obtained the consent of his parents, he had an interview with Mr. Brackenbury on the subject, and agreed to accompany him in his travels to preach the Gospel.

The exact relation in which the parties stood to each other by this engagement is not now precisely understood, although circumstantial evidence is afforded to enable us to form an opinion which cannot be far from the truth. The matter, of itself, is of no importance whatever, as the station of Mr. Kilham previous to his being received as a circuit preacher by Mr. Wesley, could have nothing to do with his character as a minister, nor with the soundness of his views

posthumous work, which is anonymous, and consists of 56 octavo pages, though not so bulky as some other discourses which have been published on the same subject, is perhaps the best compilation extant of all that is really known concerning the angelic world. Mr. Brackenbury has not, by endless and fanciful conjectures, travelled out of the Scriptures, but collected, arranged, and explained, with great judgment, what the word of God, which is the only authority on the subject, teaches us respecting those heavenly beings.

on church government, when he was at issue with his opponents. But as the fact of his having travelled with Mr. Brackenbury was, at the time when he performed a conspicuous part in the Methodist discussions and afterwards, taken hold of somewhat ungenerously by his adversaries, who insinuated that he had acted with ingratitude, it may perhaps be deemed not undeserving of brief consideration. In an Address to the Methodist Societies, written conjointly by Messrs. Mather and Pawson,\* during the agitation which prevailed after Mr. Wesley's death, for the purpose of sinking Mr. Kilham in the eyes of the public, he is mentioned as having travelled with Mr. Brackenbury in "the capacity of a servant;" and this phrase was no doubt intended to be interpreted so as to make it believed that the situation he occupied was, in its nature, menial. Had such been the case, the first Methodist preachers, who were nearly all of them taken from humble circumstances in life, should have been the last persons in the world to have upbraided a brother with his lowly origin. There is nothing reproachful in a man being raised by superior talents and exemplary conduct from an inferior to a higher station in society: on the contrary, such advancement is doubly honourable. Responsibility cannot rest with an individual respecting the circumstances of his parentage and early life, because he could have no controul over either; and should these

\* Two of the senior preachers whose names often occur in the Methodist disputes of that period. They were both good and useful men; but in their controversial pieces, and towards Mr. Kilham personally, there was a peevishness and an acrimony, which, it is hoped and believed, did not belong to their general characters. Being among the oldest and most influential Methodist preachers, they, and others of similar standing in the body, seemed to consider remarks levelled against objectionable parts of the system as reflections upon themselves; and this not only in a great measure prevented them from weighing, as they ought to have done, the arguments brought forward by Mr. Kilham, but too often so far overcame their temper as to lead them, in their replies, to use hard words instead of giving satisfactory explanations. The consequence of this was exceedingly unfortunate on both sides, causing, as it very often did, the real merits of a question to be lost sight of or disregarded, and bitter, irritating personalities, to be uttered by either party, which must always be fatal to that spirit of brotherly charity in which all disputations should be conducted, especially amongst Christians.

have been unfavourable, he who overcomes such impediments by his own abilities and personal exertions, is surely deserving of commendation instead of reproach. To the humiliating aspersion of Messrs. Mather and Pawson, Mr. Kilham replied in a way which, though concise, must have been well understood, and was probably felt to be unanswerable, as we are not aware that it was ever controverted by the parties. He said,—“I went to travel with Mr. Brackenbury in the same capacity that Mr. Bradford\* travelled with Mr. Wesley.” This was the fact. There can be no doubt that one and the principal duty of Mr. Bradford, while accompanying Mr. Wesley, was that of a general assistant in the cause of the Gospel. Mr. Bradford, though a preacher, was subordinate to Mr. Wesley; and beside preaching and other similar performances for the societies, he did all in his power to promote the personal comfort of Mr. Wesley. But he was not therefore a menial servant—such as a footman or groom. Neither was Mr. Kilham in this sense the servant of Mr. Brackenbury, who, being but delicate in regard to health,† was sometimes unable to preach, and for his own comfort, as well as to prevent the places where he was expected from suffering disappointment by his indisposition, he determined, at his own cost, to engage a young man to accompany him in his travels; and Mr. Kilham having been introduced to Mr. Brackenbury for this purpose, as before stated, journeyed with him on these terms. Mr. Bradford’s relation to Mr. Wesley cannot, perhaps, be better defined by a single word than by the term Curate. He preached and otherwise laboured as Mr. Wesley directed, and was maintained for so doing. Mr. Kilham stood in precisely the same relation to Mr. Brackenbury.

A slight attention to the following particulars, given by

\* A preacher who was one of the hundred, whom Mr. Wesley honoured with a place in the Deed of Settlement for the Connexion. Mr. Bradford travelled with Mr. Wesley many years as an attendant, or junior companion.

† See several letters from Mr. Wesley to Mr. Brackenbury, Works, vol. XIII, p. 1, where his poor state of health is often alluded to.

Mr. Kilham, of his travels with Mr. Brackenbury, will enable the reader to form an opinion of the capacity in which the former stood to the latter. The narrative, in the absence of a more detailed account of the usefulness and piety of Mr. Brackenbury, will also, as a slight sketch, serve to show in some degree what a full portrait of that excellent man would have been, had he not prohibited one from being given to the world. Having stated the engagement into which he had entered, to accompany Mr. Brackenbury, Mr. Kilham goes on to say,—“Shortly after, I went to him at Gainsborough, after I had parted with my parents and friends, committing each other to the protection of the Lord. When I arrived at Gainsborough, I found Mr. Brackenbury considerably indisposed, which obliged us to stay a fortnight at that place before we could proceed on our journey. Blessed be the Lord for ever, for appointing me to travel with Mr. Brackenbury. I found him a blessing to me; I had assurance of the Lord’s approbation respecting this undertaking. I had now great and blessed privileges put into my hands of improving myself, and was determined not to let slip the opportunities of acquiring every useful kind of knowledge. I had also many seasons for private devotion, and of much mental improvement, that I should never have had, had I continued at Epworth.

“I now became more acquainted with myself, and began to see my own ignorance; it appeared to me, that I knew nothing when compared to my master: this consideration quickened me to watchfulness and made me resolve to improve my time as much as possible. I found my master’s preaching and conversation exceedingly profitable to me, and he did not disdain to instruct me how I might be acceptable in the sight of the Lord, and useful to the people; I found myself much united to him, and was thankful to the Lord for his goodness and love to such an unworthy worm. About the end of May, we met Mr. Wesley, at Nottingham, and after we had spent a few days there, in a comfortable manner among the people, Mr. Brackenbury went to London, and from thence to Holland,



with Mr. Wesley, leaving me in the Gainsborough circuit till his return. Having been in this circuit some time, I went to London to meet Mr. Brackenbury, and was glad to find that he and Mr. Wesley were returned, and both in good health.

“After having travelled with Mr. Brackenbury in several parts, we left London, to go to Jersey: in this I found a perfect resignation to the will of God, and a desire to have every possible opportunity of living to His glory, and of being useful to mankind. I wished to devote my time as much as possible to study, and the private and public duties of my calling. I found my mind too much engaged with the thoughts of this journey, and I was thereby prevented from carefully watching over myself, and afterwards found the dissipation of my mind brought heaviness and luke-warmness upon me.

“We left London, recommended to the protection of the Lord, by the earnest prayers of his dear children, and arrived at Winchester in the evening. I was indisposed in body and mind while we staid there, but proceeded forward to Southampton, and soon after embarked for Jersey. Our lively friends at Winchester, joined in earnest prayer for our safety, under the Almighty protection, and for the spreading of the Gospel by us in the places to which we were going. My mind was much oppressed while at sea, being exceedingly sick. I could not pray nor meditate from the indisposition of body that I experienced. We arrived at the isle of Guernsey in about twenty hours, and I soon after was well and comfortable, both in body and mind. I was refreshed to see the soldiers rejoicing at our arrival; those that were pious, soon flocked around us, expressing their joy and thankfulness to God for sending us amongst them. They had for some time been destitute of the opportunity of hearing preaching, and received us with every possible mark of joy, praising God that they should again be favoured with the sound of the gospel. Mr. Brackenbury preached to them in the Barracks, and we found the presence of the Lord to be with us.

“With respect to the inhabitants in general, it is truly affecting to behold the manner in which they live, and the length of wickedness to which they proceed. They really live without God, and without hope in the world. They have liquor so exceedingly cheap, that they are slaves to drunkenness, swearing, gambling, and every other vice: except among the soldiers and a few poor of our society, we could not hear of one person that either loved or feared God. My soul was grieved at their practices, and I prayed to God to stop the torrent of their wickedness, before it proved their overthrow, and their isle became as Sodom. On Sunday we embarked for Jersey, and reached it after a tedious day and night spent in hearing the cursing and swearing of the captain and his crew, all of whom were extremely wicked, and would not be reproved by us, or in any way refrain from their blasphemies, however we might expostulate with them on the folly and wickedness of such conduct.

“We arrived at Jersey extremely fatigued and weak with our voyage. We soon found some of the soldiers\* who were pious, who rejoiced much to see us, and received us with gladness. They conducted us to the house of one of the very few that feared God in this place. There had been a Baptist Minister amongst them, but they not having it in their power to support him, most of them being very poor, and unhappily disagreeing amongst themselves, he had returned to England some time before our arrival, and the few that had formerly met together, were now dispersed already, like sheep without a shepherd. However, the Lord now inclined their hearts to be firmly united to each

\* These soldiers were the means of introducing Methodism to the island of Jersey. Some few of them, while stationed in an English sea-port town, having heard the Methodist preachers, had become pious christians. Shortly afterwards, the regiment was removed to this island, and not finding a Gospel ministry there, they wrote to Mr. Wesley stating this, and entreating him to send them a preacher. Mr. Brackenbury happened to be present when Mr. Wesley received the letter, and on being made acquainted with its contents, offered his services, which were accepted; and it was partly for the purpose of carrying this the more successfully into effect, that Mr. Brackenbury engaged Mr. Kilham, which is a further proof that he was not treated with as ‘a servant.’

other again, and kindly to receive exhortations to brotherly love, so that they appeared mutually to lay aside their prejudices, and willing to be again united in christian fellowship.

“They had imbibed strange notions and prejudices against Mr. Wesley and his preachers, from the representation of a Captain B. and their former preacher, who were both of them enemies to our doctrines and discipline; but when we had explained ourselves to them, they were fully attached to us; they were also deeply affected by the Word, and declared they believed God had sent us to them. But though they conformed to our society rules, were loving and free with us and each other, met regularly in their classes, and in many respects were proper members of our society, yet it was easy to perceive, that their former communications had considerably hurt them, and had removed that zeal, which they had previously enjoyed.

“Not having a convenient place for our meetings, we found the spreading of the word much hindered. On the Sabbath we had indeed a larger place than on the week-day, but as most of the people spoke French, many could not understand us, and these circumstances we found to be almost insurmountable impediments. Owing to these, we could only preach at one town, except at the Barracks and Fort, amongst the soldiers, and the governor soon prevented us from preaching there also.

“We now began to have considerable disturbance and persecution from those that were enemies to the truth and all righteousness. This made us cry to the Lord for His aid and protection, and to look to Him, who will never leave nor forsake them that trust in Him.

“When I walked in the streets, and saw and heard the people mocking and saying all manner of evil of me and those of our society, I was enabled to say, ‘Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.’ I was wonderfully assisted of the Lord in preaching, and particularly in the chapel, when a part of the congregation behaved unruly, and made such a noise that

I could scarcely be heard. Sometimes on these occasions I made a pause, to see if they would be silent, being scarcely able to hear my own voice. At other times they behaved so rudely, (throwing stones and dirt at me while I was preaching,) that I was obliged to leave off in the middle of the service. When I was preaching one Sunday, a gentleman was very outrageous, and offered money to the mob to take me to the governor's house, or to plunge me into the water : but the Lord restrained them from injuring me. When I came out of the pulpit, he addressed me more like a fiend out of hell, than a human being. He demanded by what authority I preached, and said it was blasphemy to proceed in the manner I had done. I replied, I acted by the authority that the Lord Jesus had given me, and left him to do as he thought proper. Another gentleman took my part, and prevented him from offering me any violence.

“The mob now finding themselves supported, as they thought, by the magistrates and gentlemen of the town, proceeded to further lengths. They came the next Sabbath-day with sticks in their hands, and declared they would carry me to the water ; a great number were assembled to see them take me out of the chapel and put me into a well, at a small distance from it. When I had concluded my discourse, and was beginning to sing, they began to make such a noise that we were prevented from proceeding. One of my friends stood at the bottom of the pulpit-steps to defend me, and to oppose any person that attempted to injure me. He took hold of my arm and led me out of the chapel, and though the mob attempted by various means to throw me down, I was supported as if by an invisible hand, and escaped from them. I passed with my friend through the field, in which the chapel stood, without receiving any other injury than a few small stones that struck me. We had also in the town a considerable disturbance : when Mr. Brackenbury preached, they threw fire and gunpowder ; broke the windows, and made such a noise and tumult, that the people were prevented from hearing to any advantage.

Before we left the isle, it pleased God to stay the madness of the people, by inclining the hearts of the Dean and others to support us, by not only not forbidding us to preach, but rather to encourage liberty of conscience.

“All the time of the persecution I found not the least fear; the Lord wonderfully supported me with a sense of His presence; I found a firm confidence and assurance that I was under His protection; that the ungodly could not proceed any further than He was pleased to permit; and that these trials should prove for my present and future advantage. I could truly say, ‘The Lord is my shield and buckler, my God in whom I trust and confide; I am thine, O Lord, do as Thou pleasest with Thy servant; make me wholly Thine for time and eternity; purify my soul, and keep me from sin, that it may not grieve me, and that I may be Thine for ever.’

“Mr. Brackenbury, at this time, was seized with a cold, which terminated in a fever, so that he was detained from assisting us five or six weeks. We, however, procured a room that would hold about eighty persons; many now attended, and most of the gentlemen and ladies in the town at one time or another heard the word, and though many of them gave their approbation to what was delivered, they still retained their wickedness, and rejected these calls to repentance. Some that seemed convinced in their judgment, appeared ashamed of the reproach of the cross of Christ, and the odious name of Methodist prevented their being joined to us. Many took much pains to prove that we were deceivers, but some, like the Bereans, searching the scriptures to see whether what we advanced was agreeable to the word of God, found our doctrines were perfectly consonant to it. These, being convinced of the great necessity and importance of being made new creatures in Christ Jesus, cast in their lot with us, and were made partakers of the sufferings of Christ. Thus several were added to our society, and joined themselves willingly to the praying remnant. Some of these had found the witness in themselves of their interest in the blood of Jesus, and others were earnestly seeking after

it. Some that had been in the way some time were quickened and stirred up to greater diligence and watchfulness: some were delivered from all fear and doubt, having fellowship with God through Christ Jesus: others who had backslided, were restored; so that when we left them in the month of June, 1784, they were in a way which I trust would lead them to the hill of Zion; and though accounted the offscouring of all things by the ungodly, they esteemed the reproach of Christ better than all worldly riches.

“We left the society under the care of those of our friends who agreed to watch over them, and meet them as often as possible. They were much troubled at our leaving them, but were at length enabled to say, the will of the Lord be done. On the first week in June, we left them, and arrived at Southampton the day after we had embarked. I was preserved from sickness on the sea, and had reason to thank God for the many instances I had experienced of his kind protection. I was troubled at the wickedness of the persons on board the vessel, and was far from being satisfied at myself, for the great backwardness I found to reprove them. The Lord, however, caused me to experience His goodness, and refreshed my soul with the visits of His grace.”

This account of Mr. Kilham's travels with Mr. Brackenbury, corresponds exactly with the kind of travelling which took place with Mr. Wesley and Mr. Bradford, and fully justifies Mr. Kilham's observation — “I went to travel with Mr. Brackenbury in the same capacity that Mr. Bradford travelled with Mr. Wesley.”

Mr. Brackenbury having been enabled to form an estimate of Mr. Kilham's abilities and character, and thinking favourably of both, he was anxious that he should become regularly stationed to a circuit, as a preacher under Mr. Wesley, and offered to recommend\* him for that purpose at the approaching

\* Mr Wesley, during his life, had, as in every thing else, the sole authority of taking out preachers to travel. His method was, when he needed helpers, to enquire at places where he went, and of persons in whose

conference in 1784. This offer Mr. Kilham declined, probably from a sense of the responsibility of the undertaking, and a diffidence as to his fitness at that time for so important an office. He was besides, as before expressed, so very happy in his connexion with Mr. Brackenbury, and finding the intercourse he had enjoyed for about a year with that estimable individual so conducive to his own improvement, that he felt unwilling it should be broken off at such a short date. However, what he declined to accept voluntarily was in a manner forced upon him by circumstances shortly afterwards. A few weeks after the conference, Mr. Brackenbury, having determined to visit the south of France, proposed to Mr. Kilham either to stay at Raithby Hall, Lincolnshire, where he then was, or go to the isle of Jersey, where Mr. Brackenbury had likewise a small establishment, and remain until he should arrive there on his return from this excursion. Mr. Kilham preferred going to Jersey, which he had recently visited, on account of the prospect of being useful to the inhabitants, who had much need of instruction in religion; and he had made up his mind to repair thither. Before setting out on his intended journey, Mr. Dufton,

judgment he could place confidence, for suitable individuals, and on being introduced to him, with a tender of their services, he engaged them if he thought proper to do so. After Mr. Wesley's death, the superintendent preachers, without consulting either the societies or circuit meetings, exercised the power of recommending whoever they might choose to conference, to be taken out to travel. This was one of the first things complained of by Mr. Kilham and others, as it was soon found that while some preachers used this prerogative in a conscientious and unexceptionable manner, others seemed to regard it as a species of patronage, and bestowed it upon their favourites, without a due regard to their fitness for the sacred office. It was therefore proposed that the superintendent's power of recommending preachers should be restricted to such individuals as had been previously approved by the society and circuit to which they respectively belonged. Reasonable and precautionary as this proposal evidently was, it gave offence, and was opposed by the senior preachers, who construed it as implying a doubt as to the soundness of their judgment and integrity. It ought, however, to be added, that the Conference afterwards became sensible of the necessity of some such restriction upon the authority of the superintendent, in reference to his recommendation of preachers to travel, and the alteration, for originally proposing which Mr. Kilham was so severely blamed, was adopted, and is now acted upon in the Wesleyan body.

the superintendent preacher of the Grimsby circuit, applied to him, stating that although four preachers had been appointed to that circuit, three only had come, and as the fourth was not then expected, he wished Mr. Kilham to take his place in the plan, and become a regular travelling preacher. Mr. Kilham again refused to be so appointed; but being desirous of doing good, and having his time at his own disposal, he offered to forego his visit to Jersey, and remain for a short period in Lincolnshire, to preach on the Sunday, and assist in the work as much as he conveniently could at other times. This proposal being gladly accepted, he laboured in the circuit for several weeks; when another of the preachers being taken ill of an ague, his services became more than ever necessary, and he fulfilled his appointments with the rest of the preachers throughout the circuit during the year.

While officiating in the Grimsby circuit under Mr. Dufton, Mr. Kilham was brought by the following circumstance to engage in his first theological controversy. He was preaching at a place called Skendleby, near Spilsby, and in the course of the sermon, he stated that every true christian had the Spirit of God witnessing with His spirit that he was a child of God. This was nothing more than uttering the sense and even repeating the words of St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans. (Chap. viii. v. 16.) However, the Rev. Edward Brackenbury, incumbent of the parish, who was no friend to Methodism, though the brother of R. C. Brackenbury, with whom Mr. Kilham travelled, being present with another clergyman, and considering the doctrine erroneous, he interrupted Mr. Kilham, by contradicting the assertion. This opposition was followed by a debate on that and other points, which lasted near an hour, in the presence of the congregation. Mr. Kilham's popular address, and the readiness with which he quoted scripture in proof of his doctrine, gave him evidently the advantage in the discussion, which was at length broken off, by Mr. Brackenbury proposing to lend him a book, written, as he said, by a learned



bishop,\* which would not fail to convince him of the unsoundness of what he had advanced, and direct him into the whole truth. Mr. Kilham having readily engaged to read whatever might be put into his hands on the subject, requested to be allowed to proceed to finish his discourse without further interruption, which being agreed to, he resumed the sermon, and at its conclusion the congregation separated.

Whether Mr. Brackenbury felt chagrined at having been somewhat foiled by a Methodist preacher, in a debate which he had himself originated, or whatever might be the cause, he soon altered his mind in reference to the arrangement which he had entered into with Mr. Kilham; and, having consulted with others of the clergy, instead of sending the book which had been promised, and waiting the effect of its perusal, they discovered what was deemed a much nearer method of settling the dispute, if not of producing a conviction, that they were in the wrong, upon the minds of the Methodists, by at once putting an end to their preaching in that neighbourhood. Mr. Brackenbury forwarded a message to this effect,—that being a magistrate, he was determined to exercise his authority in preventing their meetings, and that the first preacher who should presume, after that notice, to visit the place, should be taken up; and moreover, it was intimated to Mr. Kilham, that were he not residing at his (Mr. Brackenbury's) brother's, he would have sent him a prisoner to Lincoln Castle. The affair having unexpectedly taken this turn, it became the Methodists to resort to the best means they could for their own protection. The place of meeting was therefore immediately registered according to law; and the quarter sessions being near at hand, Mr. Kilham appeared there to take the oaths required by the

\* The work referred to was probably that published by Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, "On the office and operations of the Holy Spirit." It was written chiefly against Mr. Wesley, and answered by him in a letter to the learned prelate. See Wesley's Works, Vol. IX. p. 117, &c.

Toleration Act. The Rev. Edward Brackenbury being on the bench with the rest of the magistracy, opposed the application with great warmth, and thinking they had the option of a refusal, he wished it to have been rejected at once. This led to a further dispute between him and Mr. Kilham for about half an hour, before a very crowded court. Another clergyman, also a magistrate, being present, and not on the best terms with Mr. Brackenbury, was desirous of perplexing him a little, and for that purpose assisted Mr. Kilham in urging his claim, producing at the same time a copy of the Toleration Act, by which it appeared to be imperative on the magistrates to grant the license in case the applicant were willing to take the prescribed oaths. Mr. Brackenbury finding this to be the case, then changed his mode of opposition; and knowing that the Methodists professed to belong to the Establishment, he asked Mr. Kilham in what character he sought to obtain a license—whether as a churchman or a dissenter? This was a most inconvenient interrogation for Mr. Kilham, and one which his friend, the clergyman who had just been taking his part, could not help him in answering. Mr. Wesley, fully conscious of the difficulty of the situation in which his preachers were liable to be placed on such occasions, had wished them not to apply for licenses, unless obliged to it as a defence against being informed of or maltreated; and even in case of being driven to make this application, he advised them not to do so as dissenters, but, on taking the oaths, to profess their attachment to the Church of England. This might be practicable when there were no difficulties thrown in their way, while appearing at a quarter sessions to take the oaths; but if there existed on the part of the magistrates, or a portion of them, an unwillingness to grant the license, the disavowal by the preacher of being a dissenter, was in fact putting himself legally out of the provisions of the Toleration Act, which was specifically for the benefit of dissenters, and dissenters only. The license consequently could not be obtained with such an accompaniment. Mr. Kilham was aware of this, and on the above question being put,

he felt he was placed in an unpleasant dilemma. He made an attempt to extricate himself by adopting a middle course, and said he was a Methodist Dissenter, trusting this would have been received as expressive of a general regard for the church, at the same time that, being an unordained preacher, he was obliged in law to consider himself as a dissenter, and to make application for a license accordingly under that character. In this hope, however, he was mistaken: his reverend opponent was not in a temper to concede any thing, or to admit of any such qualification of dissenter, as was implied in prefixing the term 'Methodist' to the word.

Mr. Brackenbury contended that the law recognised only two descriptions of christians in this country,—churchmen and dissenters; and insisted upon Mr. Kilham declaring himself as belonging to either the one or the other of these. If he was a churchman, he had no need of a license from them to preach, nor could they, indeed, grant one, that being the province and prerogative of the bishop. They had only to deal with the Toleration Act, which applied exclusively to dissenters; and unless Mr. Kilham declared in plain terms, and in the form required by the Act itself, that he was a dissenter, he was not entitled to a license, nor should he have one. Being held to this point, after trying in vain to obtain a license without going the full length of avowing himself in an unqualified manner to be a dissenter, Mr. Kilham was obliged either to give up all thoughts of obtaining a license, and of preaching any more, or to comply with what the law required,—and without either mitigation or comment, to profess himself to be a dissenter. He decided upon doing the latter, and having taken the oaths as a dissenter, he received his license, and went on preaching at Skendleby, and elsewhere, as usual.

Mr. Kilham's notions of consistency were very strict and uncompromising, which will in a great measure account for the severity of some of his remarks at different periods, and in his writings, against persons in whose conduct he beheld any thing which he considered incompatible with their avowed principles and proper

character; as he could not endure any thing which partook of the nature of trimming or temporising. The scene which had taken place at the quarter sessions, and the conditions to which he had been forced to submit, in order to procure a license, had the effect, in his own estimation, of dissolving all connexion between him and the Church of England; from which he looked upon himself as having been in fact thrust out; and, alluding to this, he said afterwards,—“From that time I considered myself a *real Dissenter*.”\* He had previously regarded Methodism as a part of the Establishment, without particularly analysing the nature of the relationship; but the

\* It may, perhaps, be proper here to notice, that a meaning has latterly been affixed to the appellation Dissenter, which differs much from its former import. It was originally used in a large sense, to signify generally any one who had separated from the Church of England, whatever might be his reasons for so doing: all, therefore, who did not in every thing conform to the church, were regarded as being dissenters. But within the last few years the term has been frequently employed in a far more limited sense, as denoting those who object to a national religious establishment. This change in the use of the word is improper, inasmuch as one particular ground of dissent is thereby substituted for all the others, and consequently it leads to wrong conclusions respecting the opinions of many persons in a state of separation from the church. If we advert to the Non-Conformists, Baxter was a dissenter, not because he disapproved of a church and state connexion, but from other considerations. The same may be said of Bates, Manton, and the Non-Conformists as a body, of whom it would be a misrepresentation to state, that they stood opposed to church establishments, as such, when in fact they dissented on quite different grounds. It is of much importance, in entering into any dispute as to who are and who are not dissenters, to have the meaning of the term exactly understood in the first place, as the whole case will often depend upon the application of the word. Undoubtedly, in a general and legal sense, all are dissenters who do not communicate with the church of England; but still many of these may not be in principle opposed to an ecclesiastical establishment being provided for by the state; and therefore when the term dissenter is employed to signify pointedly those who object to such establishment, such individuals as do not come under that description, have a right to say they are not dissenters—that is, not dissenters according to this view of dissent. Many among the Wesleyan Methodists, and some individuals in the Methodist New Connexion, as well as in other Denominations, are so situated; and it is for their sakes that the above explanation is given, for the purpose of relieving them, in some degree, from a charge of inconsistency which has at times been hastily preferred against them by parties who, being themselves dissenters in the more rigid sense, and especially in reference to a church and state connexion, are often disposed to regard those who do not agree with them on that one point, as holding principles which are irreconcilable with each other.

above occurrence gave a new complexion to his character, and he believed it would have been in him nothing less than hypocrisy to have made any pretensions of being connected with it, after he had been compelled, in order to be allowed to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, to avow that he was a dissenter, and that, too, in a public court of law, and with the solemn circumstance of an oath, which he was obliged to take, in order to obtain the license.

The system of licensing places of worship and preachers, is in every view of it inexpedient, and may with good reason be objected to by all Denominations. As in the case of Mr. Kilham, it may be made annoying to individuals, and perhaps drive them to regard the avowal of dissent which is required to be made, in an extreme sense. And besides, instead of being obliged to register a building or a person, before teaching the doctrines of christianity is to be considered as authorised or proper, it ought to be inculcated,—especially upon persons of intelligence and influence, and in situations where the ordinances of the gospel are neglected or scantily provided,—as a sacred duty, binding upon every christian, to do all in his power, by teaching as well as by example, to promote a knowledge of the truths and the observance of the precepts of religion. But the party having most reason to complain of the present state of the law, which partially prevents the fulfilment of this obligation, is the Church of England. In regard to her, it is exceedingly impolitic, being equivalent to a prohibition from establishing auxiliary services in places at a distance from the parish church; and many who, from old age, infirmity, or other hindrances, are prevented from travelling two, three, or even five or six miles to worship, are in consequence virtually cut off from her communion, and left to perish in ignorance and vice. Dissenters, therefore, though not without strong reasons for complaint, have often decided advantages over the Establishment under the Toleration Act.\* If there be, for example, in a village several miles from the

\* Mr. Hardy, M. P. for Bradford, recently introduced a bill into parliament, for the purpose of abolishing the necessity of licensing places of worship, as a measure of relief to the church of England, which was thereby prevented from enlarging the sphere of its usefulness: but,

church, a population without the institution of worship, a dissenter can go and set up preaching there, but a churchman cannot; because it is required that the place of meeting and the person officiating should be licensed, and they can only be licensed on being specified as dissenting from the Establishment. The churchman is therefore held back, by the very circumstance of his being a churchman, while the dissenter, registering himself as such, has free liberty to conduct whatever religious services he may think proper to introduce.

The difficulty felt by Mr. Kilham, when seeking a license, has been experienced by many individuals, who would probably have stood connected with the Church, if they could have done so without sacrificing their usefulness, or consenting to their own or other neighbourhoods remaining without the ordinances of salvation; but when called upon to decide whether they would be restricted from doing good, or comply with the requirements of the Toleration Act,—they have, like him, been obliged in conscience to adopt the latter, as being most consonant with their duty to God and their fellow-men.

The preachers frequently met with opposition, not perhaps so formidable as that which has just been described, but of a more rude description in many places. Mr. Kilham mentions some disturbances which were made at Boston, while he was officiating in the chapel, when the mob, having collected at the outside, threw stones at the door, and otherwise annoyed him and the congregation. The annexed remarks respecting his own feelings, and his petition for those who had so misconducted themselves on this occasion, were recorded in his dairy. “I never was more comfortable and happy, than when I was suffering in the cause of Christ, and I thought myself willing, at some seasons, to die rather than run from his cause. Lord have mercy on the sinners at Boston, and give them repentance to the acknowledgment of Thy truth.”

strange to say, the bill was thrown out by a majority of members of the Establishment, who voted against it. It is an extraordinary fact, that the church which was intended to be privileged beyond all other religious denominations in this country, should, in one respect at least, be in a condition so much inferior to them all; and it is more extraordinary still, that the leading members in the church will have it so!

Mr. Kilham soon found his license useful as a protection at other places besides Skendleby.

On Sunday, June 11, he was preaching in Alford market-place; when they had just concluded singing the first time, Mr. Kilham, while engaged in prayer, was interrupted by a clergyman, who told him he was acting contrary to the law. Having said this, he waited a few minutes, to see what effect the announcement would have upon the preacher; but finding it was disregarded, and that he was proceeding in his prayer, the reverend gentleman backed it by a threat to send for the constable; and this also failing to produce silence on the part of the minister, or the dispersion of the people, the constable was brought. He, however, was very unwilling to act; but the clergyman insisted on his going up to the preacher, which he at length did, and asked for his license: it having been produced, the constable handed it over to a lawyer who was also present, to see if it was genuine and correct. Having read it, he pronounced the license to be a good one, and added, that Mr. Kilham had a right to preach, and whoever hindered him was liable to be prosecuted. This apparently was not only a proper forewarning to the party interrupting the service, but friendly to the preacher in whose favour the decision was given; and it would no doubt have been regarded as such, had not the worthy gentleman's further love of justice immediately crept out in the shape of the following hint,—that though they might not personally molest the preacher, yet there was no law against the ringing of bells, or the beating of drums! This sly suggestion was at once understood by his clients, the rabble, who instantly set about procuring the aid of those instruments; but by the time they could set them a-going, the preacher had nearly finished, and consequently the annoyance was only slightly felt by either himself or the congregation.

“At Spilsby, also,” says Mr. Kilham, “I met with some interruption: the people were very outrageous, and threw dirt, eggs, &c. at us, but the Lord preserved me, so that I was not injured nor even hit by any thing they threw. Two eggs fell upon Captain B., but he

was not at all ashamed at suffering for the name of Jesus. Amongst all this tumult the Lord was present with us, and enabled me to speak with power, and to invite sinners to the Saviour of mankind."

Being placed almost unavoidably in the situation of a regular preacher, by occurrences which could neither be foreseen nor disregarded; and as these were seconded by repeated entreaties on the part of the preachers and people for him to enter fully into the sacred office, by taking a circuit, Mr. Kilham at length consented, considering his call to the work satisfactorily made out to be of God; and that disobedience on his part, when Providence was so plainly leading him, would be a breach of duty. He was accordingly recommended to offer himself to Mr. Wesley, which he did, and was accepted, and appointed at the conference\* in 1785.

\* For the purpose of degrading Mr. Kilham, after he had fallen under the displeasure of conference, another account was given by some of the preachers of the way in which he got out to travel. In one of the pamphlets written against him, it was stated that he came into the ministry at the 'back door,' being "neither recommended by the stewards, leaders, preachers, nor people, but only by a respectable individual with whom he had travelled a short time in the capacity of a servant." The respectable individual alluded to was Mr. Brackenbury, who, as already mentioned, had offered to recommend Mr. Kilham to Mr. Wesley to be employed as an itinerant preacher; but the offer having been declined, Mr. Brackenbury went out of the kingdom, leaving Mr. Kilham in Lincolnshire, with his time at his own disposal. The circumstances under which he consented to go out as a preacher are detailed above; but for the sake of giving a more positive contradiction to the charge of his having entered at the 'back door,' it is proper to quote Mr. Kilham's own words, published at a time when the parties who understood and were concerned in the matter were living, and might have corrected the statement, had it not been faithfully given. Having mentioned some previous circumstances, he says, "The providence of God appeared to direct my way. The preachers recommended me to travel. Most of the people in every place did the same. At the quarterly meeting held in Longham Row, June, 1785, the brethren there recommended me, and Mr. Dufton recommended me to the conference, from a conviction that I might be acceptable and useful. Now, so far from Mr. Brackenbury recommending me to travel, he was in the south of France, and did not know that I was recommended at all, till several weeks after that conference. I hope these brethren made use of this unguarded declaration through ignorance or prejudice, and did not wilfully and deliberately publish this false account of my coming out to travel." The allegation that Mr. Kilham had been admitted as a travelling preacher by the 'back door,' had been put forth in justification of the then plan of individual preachers taking out any one whom they pleased, without consulting the societies where he had resided. This was one of the things which



The frame of mind in which Mr. Kilham gave himself up to the ministry, is ascertained by the following memorandum, dated June 6, 1785, which he drew up on the occasion:—

“I am at last come to this resolution, that if God is pleased to accept of me to labour in His vineyard, I will freely offer up myself to Him, that my life may be spent in His cause. I desire and pray that God would account me worthy, and enable me to preach His word. According to this resolution, I have, by the advice of Mr. Dufton, written to Mr. Wesley, offering myself to serve him as a son in the Gospel; if God incline his heart to accept of me, I hope (the grace of God assisting me) to be a faithful soldier of Christ unto my life’s end. I have now offered myself up unto God, and beseech Him to do with me according to His good pleasure. I believe the Lord will call me forth to be a standard-bearer for the truth, to an ungodly generation. I pray for gifts and grace to be useful to God and His people, and to declare His truth with boldness and simplicity of heart. I ask to be a zealous lover of Jesus and the souls that he hath purchased with his own blood. I request, O Lord, that I may so conduct myself as a Minister of Christ, that my works may be approved in the day of trial, and that I may receive a reward at Thy right-hand for ever. Lord, hear and answer, and bless me to the joy of my soul, for the sake of thy dear Son, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. AMEN.”

Mr. Kilham enumerated as being improper and requiring to be reformed. Having disposed of the charge as respected himself, and knowing that his own case had nothing to do with the merits of the question on which they were at issue, he very properly observed,—“Suppose that in the times of my ignorance I had come in ‘at the back door,’ by ‘the recommendation of a respectable individual,’ is this any reason why I should justify ‘back door’ entrance, now that I am better informed, when a fore door may be opened by the preachers and people, to admit every person of abilities for the work who has a respectable character? If the ‘back door’ admits improper persons, why should it remain open when a more excellent door may be opened?” There is sound reason in this remark; for if it were once to be received as an axiom that an individual who has happened, through ignorance or inconsideration, to be connected with abuses, must by that circumstance be precluded from mentioning them, or seeking their removal, their existence might be perpetuated for ever.

## CHAPTER III.

FROM 1785, WHEN MR. KILHAM WAS FIRST STATIONED AS A  
CIRCUIT PREACHER, UNTIL MR. WESLEY'S  
DEATH IN 1791.

THE conference at which Mr. Kilham was taken out by Mr. Wesley to travel as a preacher, was held in London, in 1785, when he was appointed for the Horn-castle circuit, to labour under Mr. Dufton, who was removed from Grimsby, and whom, as an upright and pious christian minister, he held in the highest esteem. Mr. Kilham was then twenty-three years of age, and having been favourably situated for improving his mind, with a view to the ministry, especially while connected with Mr. Brackenbury, and supplying the Grimsby circuit during a part of the previous year, he was better qualified than the generality of those who commenced travelling as Methodist preachers at that time. He seems, notwithstanding, to have had many misgivings on the subject of his fitness, but these were alleviated by his station being at Horncastle, where he was not unknown, and with Mr. Dufton, who had already taken him by the hand, and frequently encouraged him when he was cast down under a sense of his own weakness, and the difficulty and importance of the work in which he was engaged.

He repaired to his circuit immediately after conference, and found himself both refreshed and comforted at the manner in which he was received at the different places where he had to preach, and the assistance he experienced in the prosecution of his ministerial duties. Raithby, the residence of R. C. Brackenbury, Esq., being in the Horncastle circuit, the preachers had to go there occasionally in their regular rounds. An instance has been given of the opposition made to Mr. Kilham by Mr. Brackenbury's brother, who was in

holy orders, on the ground that what he taught respecting the witness of the Spirit, was erroneous. Mr. Kilham records another case of an objection made to him by a different clergyman, who alleged that his discourses drove people mad. This was a somewhat common charge brought against Methodism when it was first established, and it is still occasionally preferred by ignorant persons, and those who deny that there is any such thing as what is called christian experience. Mr. Kilham says,—“After I had preached one Sunday at Raithby, and had just left the place to go to Keal, Mr. W—, the clergyman and magistrate, came to the house, (Raithby Hall,) and began to rage exceedingly against me. His manner was so abrupt, and his passion so great, as almost to prevent utterance; at first they did not comprehend what he meant, or of whom he was speaking, but when they understood him they were quite surprised. He poured on me the bitterest reproaches, and amongst the many grievous things laid to my charge, and which were equally untrue, he said, if I were not stopped I should cause many to become insane, and that I had done this in one case already. He further threatened to lay hold on me, by the civil power, and put me in prison. Mr. Brackenbury undertook to reason with him, affirming that the gospel which I had preached was the truth, and that if they imprisoned me he would go with me; and moreover so convinced was he of its being according to scripture, that rather than renounce it, he would seal with his blood the gospel which I preached. Seeing he was saying so many hard things against the Methodist preachers, Mr. Brackenbury began to be equally plain on his part, and told him he and his brethren were dumb-dogs, and could not bark, and appealed to his own conscience for the truth of this assertion, telling him he did not preach the truth, and that unless he repented, he would have a miserable account to give of himself and his flock. And as to the preaching making people mad, he told him also, he wished that all the people in the town were so crazed (as Mr. W— was pleased to call it,) as to become distressed for their souls, and brought to

seek salvation through Christ Jesus. Mrs. Brackenbury also, at the same time, said several things to him on the subject, which seemed to perplex him much, so that he left them highly displeased; but probably on reflection he had better thoughts, for he proceeded no further against me. Glory be to God for His great goodness and loving-kindness to me, in preserving so unworthy a creature: may my future days be spent to His glory!"

Mr. Kilham was the more disposed to mark the foregoing occurrences from the circumstance of his having had a dream just before they took place, and which, he says, in concluding the account, he thought was actually fulfilled in all respects. As it is comprised in a very few words, it may be given:—"At Ashby I had a dream, that I cannot but consider as extraordinary; I dreamed I was walking, and had to pass through a farmyard; when I was in it, a great dog [Mr. W——,] came out and endeavoured to come to me, but was prevented by his chain. He was exceedingly violent, and seemed as if he would tear me in pieces; at length there came a person, [Mr. Brackenbury,] who endeavoured to pacify the dog, so that by his help I was enabled to get away."

Having been a few months in the circuit, he felt his mind greatly relieved from the fears which had distressed him at the first. He mentions the change in the following devout and grateful terms:—"At present I find my mind happy and comfortable in my situation, and am, through grace, determined to go on in the way that Providence has called me to walk in. What abundant reason have I to praise God for causing me to be kindly received in every place where I go. My soul is lost in astonishment and praise: what shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits to me? How ought I to live to God, and devote my life to His service! Help me to preach Thy blessed word with power, and may it reach the hearts of those that hear it: grant, most merciful God, that it may be productive of good; may it always leave a lasting impression on my audience: Oh! do Thou give me grace and wisdom, that I may act aright in every place where I am sent,—that I may be a

light to the people, and made an instrument in Thy hands of good to their souls. Enable me to watch and pray continually; and grant me such a measure of faith, as is necessary for one called into the vine-yard. Take me now, O Lord, into Thy care; I am Thine, may I be Thine for ever; that when Thou callest me to appear before Thee, I may be found in Christ Jesus, without spot and blameless, and be admitted into Thy kingdom to praise Thee for ever!—17th Nov. 1785.”

The annexed short passage from his diary, exemplifies the tenderness of his conscience, and shews how severely he called himself to account in private, for any inadvertency:—“I found my mind a good deal oppressed, at having too much indulged an unprofitable talkative disposition; I have great cause to be ashamed of my want of watchfulness in this particular. It would be much to my advantage frequently to bridle my tongue, and particularly when persons are indulging a back-biting, slanderous spirit. Lord, give me power to watch against this evil; may I never in this respect grieve Thy Spirit, and wound my own peace.”

It was one of Mr. Kilham’s principles, that while men ought to have right views of the essential doctrines of religion, they should likewise, as far as possible, be correct as to minor points and circumstances of worship. And he considered this duty so far obligatory, as to render it imperative upon those who had the means and opportunity of examining for themselves into every subject proposed to their faith and practice, to do so; that they might be able, if called upon, to assign a reason for every truth they embraced, and for every act they performed in the service of God. This he felt to be more especially binding upon himself, as a christian minister; who, besides having the care of his own soul, had the charge of others, and might be called upon frequently to remove scruples of conscience touching many things affecting the peace of individuals, as well as of the church. He was naturally inquisitive; and on coming under the influence of religion, his thirst for knowledge, particularly on theological subjects, had greatly increased; other circumstances

also occurred to urge him forward in the acquirement of information. Having been obliged to profess his dissent from the church of England, that subject necessarily engaged his attention, in order that he might defend himself, if occasion should require it. No sooner, indeed, had he made that profession, than he was involved in a controversy with some of his brethren—who seemed to think that what had taken place at the quarter sessions, should be regarded as a matter of form necessary to be gone through for a particular purpose, and need not be followed up by corresponding avowals afterwards, when the license had been procured. But Mr. Kilham had other sentiments and nicer scruples on these points; with him nothing was regarded as indifferent, and to be passed over as having been merely ceremonial, which had been sanctioned by an oath. He therefore maintained, that having publicly professed himself a dissenter, that profession must continue to be in force with him, so long as he retained those opinions; and that if he became convinced of their unsoundness, he would be called upon to recant them unequivocally and in public. Besides occasional conversation with other ministers, a Mr. Fish, at that time one of Mr. Wesley's preachers, having been present when Mr. Kilham spoke of the Methodists as being dissenters, entered into a controversy with him on the subject. This led to an interchange of letters between them afterwards, which was continued once a month for two years; Mr. Fish taking the Church, and Mr. Kilham the dissenting side of the question. Mr. Fish was at first exceedingly strong in his opinions; however, whether from conviction arising out of this discussion, or other causes, is not known, but the fact is ascertained, that he shortly afterwards was ordained as a dissenter, and went to the West Indies to preach the Gospel in that character.

When Mr. Kilham went out to travel, a subject immediately relating to the Methodist preachers themselves was the topic of much thought and partial dissatisfaction. This was the celebrated Deed of Settlement, which had been recently enrolled in Chancery

by Mr. Wesley; and as it appointed only one hundred of the preachers to constitute the annual conference, leaving the rest, among whom were several of the senior brethren, unnoticed, it gave offence to many, who, besides considering themselves slighted by the omission of their names, apprehended that, after Mr. Wesley's death, they should be left entirely to the mercy of those who were nominated in this important instrument.

As this deed has been denominated the Magna Charta of Methodism, it will be proper shortly to notice it, and more especially as its object and powers have been the subjects of considerable attention and debate since Mr. Wesley's death.

It has been stated in a previous chapter, that in commencing to build chapels, the Methodists had no particular plan; and in drawing up the writings for the Chapels, the first intention was to invest them absolutely in trustees, without any restrictions, except that they should be used as places for worship.\* Mr. Wesley had no wish to be identified therein, or to secure to himself any controul whatever over them. But it was suggested to him, that in case the deeds were thus formed, without any reference being made to the particular purpose for which the chapels were erected, he would have no security for the occupancy of the pulpits either by himself or his preachers; and that in time, or indeed so soon as the trustees might so determine, even he, who had been the cause of their being built, might be excluded from them; and they might be placed in the hands of other preachers holding different

\* Most of the old presbyterian chapels in England had their trust deeds formed in this vague and uncertain manner; the consequence of which defect has been, that the trustees, having in many cases apostatised from the evangelical faith professed by their original founders, the chapels, in violation of the plainest principles of equity, have been transferred into the hands of Socinians, who hold at the present day a great proportion of the meeting-houses which were built by the orthodox non-conformists. As a security against such misappropriation, it has become the usual practice among dissenters to embody in the chapel deeds a definition and an enumeration of the essential doctrines to be taught, and to specify the particular purposes for which the buildings were erected. This is a most important matter, and should always be attended to in the formation of chapel trusts.

sentiments, and not even ministers of the same gospel. This necessarily changed Mr. Wesley's views as to the mode of settling the chapels on trust; and as the connexion was in its infancy, the first remedy provided against the possible consequences just adverted to, was to reserve to himself a life interest in the chapels, so that they could not under any circumstances be taken from him. Shortly afterwards, and as regards some of the chapels, a like interest was also reserved in favour of Mr. Charles Wesley, by which, during life, both or either of the Messrs. Wesley had the right of the pulpit as their own. When the Itinerant plan had come into full exercise, and conferences had begun to be held, further modifications and securities for Methodism were introduced into the trust deeds. Besides reserving to Mr Wesley (and in many instances to his brother, Mr. Charles Wesley,) the privilege of occupying the pulpits, and appointing persons to preach therein during his life, it was additionally covenanted, that after Mr. Wesley's death, the annual Methodist conference should have the same power of appointment for ever. This latter form became the general and established mode of settling the chapels; and, as the number built with such provisions in the deeds already amounted to several hundreds, and was rapidly increasing every year; and, moreover, Mr. Wesley being so very far advanced in life that he could not remain long in the exercise of the power which he had secured to himself individually, and his brother Charles was also old and infirm, it became a grave question for consideration—how the conference stood in a legal point of view, and whether its position was such that it would be able, on the event of Mr. Wesley's death, to claim the rights of the pulpits, and exercise the functions of appointing preachers, according to the provisions made in its behalf in the chapel deeds? On enquiry, it was soon discovered that the conference, though a conspicuous institution in Methodism, was, when legally considered, a mere nonentity; and, consequently, neither itself nor any privileges for which it might set up a claim grounded on the trust deeds, could be recognized or maintained



in any of the courts of law at Westminster Hall. In this state of things, therefore, on the decease of Mr. Wesley, all authority on the part of conference over chapels must have ceased, notwithstanding mention was made of, and certain specified powers were nominally granted to it, in the chapel writings. To give a being, therefore, to conference, in a technical sense, was of course an object of great solicitude both with Mr. Wesley and those preachers who understood the critical position of affairs as they then existed; and for the purpose of effecting this, Mr. Clulow, an eminent solicitor in London, was referred to for advice, as was also Mr. Maddocks, one of the seniors at the Chancery bar, who recommended that a deed of declaration should be drawn up, and enrolled in the high court of Chancery,—defining the phrase “Yearly conference of the people called Methodists,”—appointing persons as members constituting the same,—providing, in order to its perpetuity, for the filling up of vacancies as they might occur,—authorising the admission, stationing, and expulsion of preachers,—and specifying the time and manner of assembling and conducting the conference. Mr. Wesley accordingly had a deed prepared in pursuance of this advice, and therein he appointed one hundred preachers, whom he named, for the purposes just mentioned; and this instrument, having been properly recorded in chancery in 1784, constitutes the title deed of the conference to its power of assembling and acting from year to year.

Only a few of the preachers having been privy to the making of the Poll Deed, as soon as its existence and enrolment became known to the generality, a loud outcry was raised against it by a portion of them, who said many severe things against the deed itself, and against both Mr. Wesley and two or three of the leading preachers, who, it was believed, having influence over him, were the occasion of this transaction, for the purpose of accomplishing their own ends after his death. It was in vain that the discontented individuals were told, that had not some such document been created, the Methodist chapels might have become

lost to the connexion,—as they imagined, from the circumstance of several of the older preachers not having been included in “the hundred,” and such only being chosen as Mr. Wesley approved, or who had been recommended to him by his favourites, that some concealed object was about to be accomplished. It was even alleged, by at least one of the dissatisfied party, that Mr. Wesley was erecting himself into a kind of Pope, and that a portion of his preachers had been made the “select hundred” that they might serve him as his “Cardinals !”

The blame of the deed being chiefly heaped upon Mr. Wesley’s head, near seventy of the most respectable and influential preachers, in order to exonerate him, drew up and signed a declaration, stating that what had been done in reference to it was in consequence of an unanimous request of conference, which had previously been presented to Mr. Wesley; and that the subscribers approved of the matter entirely. This testimony was produced at the conference in 1785, and afterwards printed. Although it did not, at the moment, totally silence all complaint, it abated it considerably; and two or three preachers having given up travelling,\* partly in consequence of the deed, or rather, perhaps, because they were not amongst “the hundred,” discontent seems gradually to have died away, or at least to have been so far suppressed as to have occasioned Mr. Wesley little or no uneasiness afterwards.

Whatever may have been the opinion of Mr. Wesley respecting the general conduct of those who had condemned the deed of declaration altogether, he seems, on reflection, to have regarded the fears of some of the preachers, who had not been named in the hundred, as to the power of the conference to deal hardly with them, if ever it should be so disposed, as not entirely without foundation. And for the purpose of preventing, if possible, any such consequences, he wrote the following letter in their behalf, and committed it to the care of Mr. Bradford, who travelled

\* Of these, the Rev. John Hampson, sen., and the Rev. John Hampson, jun., afterwards Rector of Sunderland, may be mentioned.

with him. It was produced and read at the first conference after Mr. Wesley's death; and the conference unanimously resolved to act upon it. The letter is dated April 7, 1785, being rather more than a year after the enrolment of the Poll Deed, and six years before Mr. Wesley's death:—

“MY DEAR BRETHREN,

“Some of our travelling preachers have expressed a fear, that after my decease, you would exclude them, either from preaching in connection with you, or from some other privileges which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent any such inconvenience, than to leave these my last words with you.

“I beseech you by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the *Deed of Declaration*, to assume any superiority over your brethren: but let all things go on, among those itinerants who choose to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit.

“In particular, I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if you now love God and your brethren, to have no respect of persons in stationing the preachers, in choosing children for *Kingswood School*, in disposing of the yearly contribution and the preacher's fund, or any other public money: but do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even to the end.

JOHN WESLEY.”

This timely and successful mediation with the hundred, in behalf of the great body of preachers, shews that whatever might be the privileged position in which, for special purposes, Mr. Wesley placed any of his assistants, his design was not that they should domineer over the rest; and it is probable, that had some one been present to caution him of the possibility of conference assuming, either at once, on his death, or by degrees afterwards, undue powers over the lay part of the connexion—viz. trustees and members—who had not, in the Poll Deed, been provided with seats in the annual assembly, the same regard for the just rights

of all, and the same goodwill towards every class of his followers, which dictated the above solemn charge, or letter of entreaty, would have led him to prescribe some expedient for the prevention of any encroachment upon the christian liberties of the laity, which would cause uneasiness in that department of the connexion.

Mr. Wesley had nothing of suspicion or jealousy in his composition; and therefore he was not himself the individual to make nice calculations for the future, or to provide remedies against evils which were merely problematical, and perhaps remote. He dealt almost entirely with things present; and, unless at the suggestion of others he hardly ever, in adopting an expedient, took into account the possibility of a measure instituted for good, being in time corruptly perverted to opposite purposes. He had little care on this head, his rule being to reap the immediate benefit, and to rely upon some antidote being discovered, in case it should be found to operate injuriously afterwards. The preceding letter throws considerable light upon Mr. Wesley's peculiarity of character in this respect; and it also shows, that if, in making an important arrangement, there was at first any imperfection or oversight, he was ever ready, on being made sensible of it, to supply what was defective, and to render his plans as universally acceptable as possible.

In forming and enrolling the Deed of Declaration, Mr. Wesley's anxiety seems to have rested on one object;—he looked only at the necessity of providing an authority to station the preachers, and continue the itinerant plan after his death. And in appointing the hundred preachers for this purpose, it appears not to have occurred to him, when only nominating part of his preachers to constitute the conference, that this distinction might be deemed invidious, and prove unsatisfactory, if not injurious, to the rest; that, in fact, by dividing them into two castes, they ceased to be equal, as to privilege; and that, as the natural tendency of things, in such cases, is to increase the disparity, by the ruling party taking care, as they mount higher themselves, to provide lower places for their non-enfranchised

brethren, so in the course of time all sympathy between them would be annihilated, and their interests cease to be identical. When the subject was placed before Mr. Wesley in this light, and the grounds of suspicion, as to the salutary operation of the Poll Deed in its present form, were stated, he saw reason to do every thing he could to extend its provisions to all the preachers, and by that means to prevent any such consequences as were apprehended. And it is not inconsistent with this part of Mr. Wesley's conduct to conclude, that if any one, having influence with him, had foreseen and mentioned the danger of that power with which he was investing the preachers over the laity, being eventually employed in the subversion of their liberties, he would assuredly have taken up their cause in the same spirit of impartiality and affection, as that in which he interfered in behalf of the preachers. But unfortunately no one seems to have entertained suspicion on the subject, or to have drawn Mr. Wesley's attention to any point affecting the rights of his people, who were entirely lost sight of in all the arrangements which were made for the connexion in general.

The following additional considerations may perhaps partly assist to account for this omission:—

From the time of its formation, the nature and extent of the powers created by the Deed of Declaration have been subjects of much discussion in the Methodist body. The preachers were the first to canvass its provisions, inasmuch as they appeared to be the parties chiefly, if not solely interested in it; but since the death of Mr. Wesley, the deed has been invested with a comprehensiveness of character which exceeds every thing that was originally anticipated as in any wise belonging to it. The intentions of Mr. Wesley, in drawing up this instrument, have been interpreted in two ways, which may be briefly explained. First, it has been said, that in framing this deed, a threefold object, and nothing beyond that, was intended to be accomplished; viz. (1.) To secure to Methodism possession of the chapels which had been or should be built for its use; (2.) To establish and continue the itinerant plan,

which had proved of such singular utility in promoting a revival of religion ; (3.) The perpetuating of the Methodist ministry. The deed accordingly makes express provision for all these ends. It gives the power of stationing preachers to the pulpits of all the chapels—of removing those preachers to different circuits—and of admitting into, and excluding circuit preachers from, the connexion. The deed gives no further power than what is absolutely needful for the accomplishment of these purposes. Making laws for the body generally, and exercising authority over circuit or local meetings, are not named, nor any where alluded to. Yet, secondly, it has been maintained, that besides the above prerogatives, secured by the Poll Deed to the conference, it was the intention of Mr. Wesley that it should be clothed with universal authority over the entire connexion, and alone have the power to make such rules and regulations as it might deem proper for the discipline and government of Methodism. The conference itself has acted upon this latter construction of the Poll Deed ; and from the period of Mr. Wesley's death, it has exercised the functions of legislating for, and controlling, the whole Methodist community, according to its own will and discretion. There are, however, strong reasons for supposing that, in forming the Deed of Declaration, Mr. Wesley had no design of investing conference with those attributes of absolutism which have since been claimed. He appears to have intended the power of conference not to be supreme, but separate from, and collateral with, other prerogatives possessed respectively by different departments in the connexion ; and which, while helpful in the general cause, would serve as a check upon each other, and be so exercised as not to destroy the harmony of the whole system. For example—The chapels were vested in the trustees, who had authority secured to them by the chapel deeds, to see that the doctrines taught therein were agreeable to Methodism, as explained in Mr. Wesley's Sermons and Notes on the New Testament. Again, the different societies and circuits, with their proper officers, had by long usage

been accustomed, at certain meetings of their own, held weekly and quarterly, to transact their particular local church business, and form and carry out plans for the promotion of religion in their own districts. Such was the general economy of Methodism, with Mr. Wesley at its head, long before the Poll Deed was either executed or thought of; and all that seemed to be wanting, was to provide for the continuance of the system after Mr. Wesley's death. The preachers were regarded as the occupants of the pulpits, and the agents and guardians of the itinerant plan; and accordingly the Deed of Declaration was devised, to authorise them to meet in conference annually for the purpose of admitting persons into the regular ministry—to station the preachers to the different circuits,—and to do every thing which was requisite for the fulfilment of this part of the Methodist economy. The system, reduced to these elements, is quite simple; and provided it could have been carried on apart from selfish considerations, and in the pure spirit of christian patriotism, which distinguished Mr. Wesley and his first assistants, it would not have needed any of that more complex and ponderous machinery,—that reference to abstract principles, and the balancing of different interests, which becomes necessary when there is discovered in one class an ambitious desire, by incroaching upon or sinking the rights of others, to engross to themselves the entire rule and authority over the whole. In all Mr. Wesley's arrangements, it seems to have been taken for granted, that his preachers would in succession always retain that meekness, self-denial, and singleness of purpose, which marked the early days of Methodism; and no transition in the body from persecution to rest, from reproach to honour, and from poverty to affluence and its consequent temptations, was calculated upon in any of his provisions for the future.

It has been matter of surprise with many judicious persons, that in the formation of conference, Mr. Wesley should have so far deviated from the principle acted upon by other christian communities, as to have made no provision for the laity being present at its

meetings. The Church of England, the Church of Scotland, the Reformed Churches abroad, and the various dissenting denominations in Great Britain, have all been constructed with a view to the union of both clergy and laity in the functions of legislation and ecclesiastical discipline; the Church of Rome being the only community which has placed the entire management and supremacy in the priesthood. No man could be more opposed to popery than was Mr. Wesley, or more keensighted in his perception of its corruptions and apostacy having been the result of clerical ambition; and there is no authority for supposing that he intended to take her for a pattern in this respect, any more than in her peculiar doctrines and discipline. The only way, therefore, in which his having so constituted the Conference\* as to exclude the laity can be accounted for,

\* The Conference being composed of preachers only, its designation in the Deed of Declaration is strikingly inappropriate; which Dr. Whitehead, in his *Life of Wesley*, has noticed in the following terms:—"It would be improper," observes Dr. Whitehead, "to pass over the Deed, without making an observation or two upon it. Now the first thing that strikes me, is the title itself. 'A Declaration and Establishment of the Conference of the *People* called Methodists.' This surely is a most incongruous title. It is well known, that the *people* called Methodists, never held a Conference since Methodism existed. The Conference is an assembly of *itinerant preachers* only (except two or three clergymen); and its members are not assembled by any authority derived from the people. When sitting, it exercises powers which are neither derived from the people, nor under any controul by them. It elects members into its own body, or excludes them at pleasure; it makes regulations and laws, not only for the itinerant preachers, but for all ranks and orders of persons in the Societies: and while these things are transacted, neither local preachers, trustees of chapels, stewards, leaders, or any of the people, have a single voice or a single representative in the assembly; the people have no check, no balance of power, against any regulation or law the Conference may choose to decree. It is difficult to conceive why this assembly of a few preachers was called the Conference of the People called Methodists; unless it was to give the people a hint, that they ought to have some representatives in an assembly where laws are made by which they, as Methodists, are to be governed." Vol. 2, p. 412. It is necessary to remark that the above quotation is from the genuine edition of *Wesley's Life*, by Dr. Whitehead, published in London, in 2 vols. 8vo. A mutilated and spurious book was shortly after its first appearance, printed in Dublin, also in 2 vols. 8vo., with Dr. Whitehead's name in the title-page, but which omitted all those passages that were unpalatable to Dr. Coke and the high conference party. Dr. Whitehead's *Life* is the best and most impartial account of Mr. Wesley which has hitherto been written. It is now very scarce, and should be republished, with some revision, and illustrative notes,



is, that he regarded the trusteeship and circuit meetings as respectively having, for local purposes, a paramount authority, and as standing on a kind of equality with Conference; and his intention was, that each, holding peculiar powers in its own separate department, should by that means be able to adjust its influence to counterbalance any undue leaning on the part of the others. Mr. Wesley estimated Conference, not as a ruling authority elevated to exercise dominion over the whole connexion, but as co-existent, for the purposes specified in the Poll Deed—precisely as parties who had been appointed trustees existed for the purposes mentioned in chapel deeds; and stewards and leaders for society and circuit purposes. This will appear the more probable when it is remarked, that there are the strongest reasons for believing that Mr. Wesley regarded the work of legislation as having been completed by himself. He had fixed the doctrines and the terms of membership: he had portioned out the duties of preachers, trustees, leaders, and stewards; and, having provided for the continuance of the itinerant plan by the Deed of Declaration, he seems to have considered the framework as perfectly constructed for all the purposes of Methodism; and all that remained to be done was, for each department of the body, whether preachers or people, to labour, according to the system, as already settled, to do all the good which it might be able to accomplish. Such appears to have been Mr. Wesley's plan, and such his intention, respecting the community which he had been the instrument of raising up; and if a different turn was given to the system after his death, it was, we feel no doubt, as contrary to his design and expectation, as it has proved detrimental to the harmony and liberty of the lay portion of his people.

From some entries in Mr Kilham's diary, he seems, shortly after he became a circuit preacher, to have become apprehensive, that, on Mr. Wesley's death, many changes would be effected in the body, which might not prove generally satisfactory. There were, indeed, innumerable surmises in reference to this, amongst both

the senior and junior preachers, who not unfrequently alluded to it in their letters and private conversation. But being himself young, and wholly occupied with the immediate and more important duties of his office, it does not appear that Mr. Kilham felt much interest in the matter, or that till a few years after, at least, he had any thoughts of taking a prominent part, or any part at all, in discussions which might be originated on the subject. So far, indeed, from purposing to plunge into controversy, it is evident, from several passages originally written only for his own use, that his intentions were, in case of alterations being made in the connexion which he could not conscientiously adopt, to have retired peaceably, without identifying himself with any unpleasant disputations. Of the passages referred to, the two following, written about 1789, may be selected:—

“I find my mind at present in a happy frame, and at peace with all men, and I am more than ever determined to spend my life in God’s service. I purpose to preach as often as I can, to lay myself out in the blessed work of the Lord, that I may, if possible, save all the souls that hear my words; I will, by God’s help, thrust myself into every place where I can gain admittance, and as much as possible preach the Gospel in those places where the blessed sound has not been heard. I will use all my art and strength to pluck sinners as brands from the burning. I am resolved to continue an itinerant preacher, as long as my life and health continue, *provided there be no alteration after Mr. Wesley’s death, that shall make it most advisable to desist.* If the world, the flesh, and the devil invite me from this glorious work, I am determined to go on in the work God hath called me unto, and continue in the same to the end of my days, if such be the will of God; and what I now write, shall remain a witness against me, if I ever deviate from my vow, unless (as above) *I have sufficient reason to the contrary.*”

The next passage, though brief, is equally to the point:—“God knows my resolution is *to continue in the Connexion while I can do it with a clear conscience, and*

when I cannot do that, I will enter some other sphere of action: God has helped me thus far, and he will help me unto the end."

In a few months after he had been appointed to his first circuit, Mr. Brackenbury returned from France, and a correspondence was begun between them. Mr. Kilham was anxious, in his new situation, to avail himself of the earliest opportunity of communicating the particulars of his state of mind, and of receiving such assistance and advice as his kind and more experienced friend might be able to impart. The following judicious recommendations, which it may be useful to place on record, were sent by Mr. Brackenbury, in reply to a letter from Mr. Kilham:—

5th Nov., St. Heliers, Isle of Jersey, 1785.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,

Your favour was extremely welcome. Glad am I to hear of your soul's prosperity, and more especially of your providential appointment to labour in the Vineyard, not doubting but he that called you to the *good work* will supply you with all necessary qualifications. I rejoice to think you are called to labour in our Circuit, and humbly pray God to render your preaching and example a blessing to the people. You judge very right to set out on the principle of being "*a zealous preacher and lover of the Truth*;" and as you request my advice, the following hints, which I have gathered from observation and experience, may not, with the blessing of God, be altogether useless. 1. Do not entertain any thoughts, unless necessity compels you, of changing your state. Think it happiness enough to be espoused in the Lord Jesus Christ. Begin to think of loving the creature, and then all that is burning and shining in your character, will presently be at an end. 2. Redeem the time, by spending great part of it in private; or when you cannot have convenience of retirement, read and study, instead of talking familiarly with the people; don't mind if they think you reserved; your example will speak louder, and do them more good than religious gossiping, and your preaching will thereby be more lively and powerful, as you will find more freedom and confidence towards God. 3. Make little of outward comforts; use them with indifference and moderation, that when you are deprived of them, as may sometimes be the case, you

may feel no inward uneasiness about them. 4. Converse only of the things of God; and when you visit the people, do not rest in generals, but suit your discourse as much as possible to their particular states; and endeavour to impress divine truths on their hearts and conscience. 5. Be short in your exercises. You will thereby be more useful and edifying to the people; and you will have abundantly more satisfaction in your own soul. Lastly, in all your addresses at the throne of Grace, and in your whole walk, be humbly resigned to the divine will. When you are in trouble and heaviness, don't strive to believe and think it is the only means of finding relief; but resign yourself in the moment; go to the Lord just as you are, without reasoning or doubting, and embrace his will in the present trial, whatever it be, as best for you, and you will find certain, nay, sometimes almost unexpected deliverance. This is what few Christians perceive. They seek ease in their trouble, and because they do not presently obtain it, they grow impatient or unbelieving. Suffice it for us, my dear friend, that the will of the Lord is done, and that the sacrifice is so much the more acceptable, as the flesh and nature oppose it the most. Hoping these few hints may prove a blessing,

I remain, with kind love to all enquiring friends,

Your affectionate Brother in the Lord,

R. C. BRACKENBURY.

He passed through this year with good acceptance as a preacher; and from his letters, it appears his ministry was useful to several who sat under it; yet he was by no means satisfied with himself, but felt the necessity of striving to obtain higher degrees of grace and wisdom.

At the Conference held in Bristol, 1786, he was stationed in the Gainsbrough circuit. Immediately on his appointment, we find him pouring forth his heart in these words:—"I have found, and do find, a sincere desire to give myself afresh to God, and am determined to watch against that which most easily besets me. I desire from my heart, that God would not suffer me to be drawn aside, and earnestly wish I may be a humble preacher, acceptable to all who hear my voice. Oh my God! accept a heart that pants for thee; thou knowest I would fain give myself to thee, and live to thy

glory; Oh! give me grace to do it; I pray for wisdom to direct me in every respect; enlighten my understanding that I may be able to divide the word of truth aright; give me to abhor every thing of affectation; and teach me to be altogether such a one as may show forth thy glory. May my walk and manner be acceptable to all that hear; grant me grace faithfully to preach thy word; make me willing to receive instruction; Oh! give me always to eye thy glory, and make me constantly proof against all temptations; let me have the grace that would preserve me from whatever would give just cause of offence to thy people; grant me always thy Holy Spirit in preaching and prayer; and help me truly to go forward to declare thy counsel to sinners; give me whatever else may be to thy glory, and my present and future good, for the sake of Jesus Christ." This is a specimen of the manner in which Mr. Kilham generally concluded his accounts in the private journal which he wrote for his own use: his observations are, throughout, much intermixed with short ejaculatory expressions of prayer, which shew the sincerity and excellence of the man, as well as the genuine spirit of devotion, which pervaded his soul.

He had, from his first entrance into the ministry, a trembling anxiety respecting his usefulness. Being convinced that every call to this work was a call to do good to the souls of men, his grief or joy greatly depended upon the apparent effect of his preaching. On this subject he writes as follows, shortly after he had entered upon the duties of the Gainsbrough circuit:—"I thought, with much concern, I had been labouring many weeks without any success, but have of late had some proofs that this was not the case. I found a praying heart at Fereby, and had tolerable liberty in speaking to the people. I visited a man to all appearance near eternity; he seemed in trouble for his soul, and cried to God for mercy; he had many years heard preaching, but was, as he said, eaten up with the world, which prevented him from enjoying anything that was spiritual. I conversed with him freely, and prayed with him, and found the love of God in my own soul.

I called the day after on him, and was comforted in visiting him."

"I received a letter from Mr. Brackenbury, desiring me to meet him at Raithby: I found I could comply without inconvenience to myself or neglecting the circuit, and I was happy in having the opportunity. When I arrived at Raithby, I found Mr. Brackenbury just ready to depart. We rejoiced to meet and see each other, and had a comfortable season together; I rode with him to Syleby, and rejoiced in being with him whom I loved, and to whom I found myself so much united. We spent a good deal of time in secret together, and conversed freely to each other respecting the Lord's dealing with us, and of the things of eternity. He told me many pleasing things respecting the Lord's dealings with the people he had laboured amongst, and we rejoiced together for what the Lord had wrought, and for our future prospect of sinners being converted to God. We travelled comfortably together to Boston, and then parted, recommending each other by prayer to the grace and protection of God."

His exertions during this year were beyond his bodily strength; and there were, towards the latter end, some apprehensions that his constitution was seriously, if not irrecoverably, impaired by preaching too frequently, and otherwise applying himself early and late to his official duties. One of his brethren in the ministry, with whom he had travelled in the former circuit, thus admonishes him on the subject in one of his letters:—"I hope you are better than you were. You must not preach too often, nor too loud, nor too long. Remember the sixth commandment. If the local preachers will not supply, take care of yourself." The fatigues of hard labour having brought on an illness, Mr. Kilham was recommended to remove to Hull for a few weeks, which he did, and the effect of rest and sea-bathing, by the blessing of God, was to restore him in a sufficient degree, that he was enabled to return to his own circuit, and resume preaching, before Conference. A report of his bad health having reached Mr.

Brackenbury, he wrote to Mr. Kilham the subjoined letter, which is equally affectionate and pious, and must have had a consoling influence on Mr. Kilham's mind.

*Raithby Hall, 20th June, 1787.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I received your very acceptable favour in Jersey, but was prevented from answering it shortly by bodily weakness and indisposition. Since my return I was somewhat better, but am yet very poorly of a cold. I was very sorry to hear on Sunday of your ill state of health, and that you went to Hull in hopes of receiving benefit from bathing in the sea, but that, being told it was not at all suitable for your case, you were returned back again,—however, I could not learn whether to Epworth or Gainsbro'. Upon hearing this, I set out on Monday intending to come and see you, but when I got to Horncastle I found myself very poorly, and met with a very disagreeable affair which obliged me to go to Olford the following morning. On these accounts I was forced to postpone my journey, but as I expect to set out for Buxton in about ten days time, I still cherish the hope of calling upon you in my way, if the Lord permit, only you must send me word, if you can, where you are repaired to. It was a great comfort to me to find by your last, that you were growing in grace, and ripening, perhaps—for I learn that your complaint is a deep consumption—for a glorious eternity. If this is the case, courage, my dear Brother Pilgrim!—a few more rolling billows and you will gain the wished-for shore. I doubt not of your being sweetly supported by that God of unbounded love and never-failing compassion, whom you have sincerely served. As for me, I still lag behind, and if my weak, crazy vessel, amidst rocks and shoals, together with contrary winds and torrents, should ever reach the harbour; and if my poor sinking soul—amidst ten thousand dangers, and a world of temptations and corruptions—should ever get to Heaven, the blessed haven of rest, 'tis as much, I often think, as it will do. It will be nothing less than a miracle of mercy. I have several things to communicate, if the Lord vouchsafe to favour us with an interview in this vale of tears. Meantime, let me exhort you, my dear brother, to faith and patience. They are the graces for suffering times, and I rest assured they do not fail you in this time of need. If your sickness be unto death, I should esteem it a peculiar privilege to profit by

your dying councils and prayers; or if the gracious Lord restore you again (which I humbly request, with submission to his will,) believe it will be for your more abundant usefulness. Our family join kindest love to you. My brother, it is probable, will accompany me as far as Epworth or Gainsbro', where you happen to be.

I remain, my very dear Brother,

Yours affectionately in the Lord,

R. C. BRACKENBURY.

At the Manchester Conference, 1787, he was appointed for Scarbro' circuit, where he continued two years. He says in his journal,—“I entered upon my labours praising God for his mercies to me; I found a jealousy over myself, lest I should do anything contrary to the character I wished to maintain, and was determined to live in prayer and watchfulness, and be constantly devoted unto God. I was grieved to see so few people attend the preaching at one or two of the places in the circuit, and desired the societies to plead earnestly with God, for a display of his goodness in a revival of his work amongst them; I besought them in the name of Jesus to walk circumspectly themselves. I found myself happy amongst them, and was comforted with the hope of the work prospering, for I had great liberty in preaching, and had solemn seasons with some of the societies, and particularly at Scarbro'. God blessed my coming amongst them, and gave me some seals to my ministry. I went on my way rejoicing, and met with a kind reception in every part of the circuit. The air seemed to suit my constitution; the people were exceedingly kind and loving in most of the places, and my entertainment in general very agreeable, for the people everywhere did all they could to make the preachers comfortable. The scene of our travelling was a little varied on the moors, but the inconveniences we experienced from the roads were amply repaid by the kindness of the friends when we got to them.”

Mr. Kilham at this time entertained the thought of offering himself to go to the West Indies as a missionary, and wrote to Mr. Warrener, who was stationed at



Antigua, for information. It will be seen by the annexed extract from Mr. Warrener's letter, what were the enquiries proposed to him by Mr Kilham on this subject:—

*Antigua, June, 1788.*

DEAR BROTHER,

I received yours and brother Beal's both in one, some time ago, and now intend giving you an answer to your questions as well as I am able. The accounts of the West Indies are so romantic and extravagant, as they are given by many in England, that it is impossible to form any proper idea of them. The climate is much more moderate than I expected, although in the months of April, May, June, July, and August, it is hot in the height of the day; but what makes it tolerable, is the sweet trade breezes which mostly blow from North-East to South-East. In the rest of the months it is more cool, but more unhealthy. I find the heat and mosquettous, and every thing disagreeable to an European at first, become quite easy by care. I shall now answer your questions:—1st. "Is it possible for persons of a consumptive constitution to bear the climate?" I asked my physician, and he told me the best thing in the world was to come to the West Indies—many do it purely for that complaint. 2nd. "Would it be possible for us who have been used to preach in England to speak to the capacities of the Negroes? &c." You know, Brother, all the preachers here, and on the other Islands, are English or Irish, and we find no difficulties in this; for though many of them cannot read, yet thousands of them were born on the Island; and those who have come from Africa are soon taught, as they are daily spoken to in the English tongue; no other language is spoken on this Island; they are able to understand very well what is spoken to them of the Things of God; glory be to God! many of them can not only understand, but speak of them too. 3rd. You ask "Are they mild and teachable, or savage and unruly?" They are far from being unruly; most of them are better behaved than our own countrymen, especially the lower class of people; as to their being mild, I cannot say much for that; they are naturally warm and passionate, and show it to each other; but they very rarely show any thing of the kind to a white person. As to books, I make no doubt you have a collection of useful ones by you; if you come, bring them all and any others you think good. I have

bought several since I came here ; but it is your best way to buy them in England. Lastly, as to clothes ; if I had any right information when I came from England it would have been good for me ; but I did bring many things I never expected to wear ; but I find them all useful but worsted stockings, and these are quite useless ; what suits this country is as follows, &c. \* \* \* May the Lord direct you in all things, is the prayer of

Your affectionate Brother,  
WILLIAM WARRENER.

It is probable that between the time of writing to Mr. Warrener, and receiving an answer, Mr. Kilham had seen it his duty to remain in England, where he was labouring both acceptably and usefully, rather than go on a foreign mission ; or perhaps such might be the will of Mr. Wesley. It is evident, however, that the subject was one in which he felt much interest, which he showed by corresponding with Dr. Coke, who had the chief direction of the mission ; and, at the Doctor's request, by enquiring out, while stationed in Aberdeen, and recommending proper persons to engage in that apostolic enterprise.

Shortly after entering the Scarbro' circuit, Mr. Kilham began to think of marrying, and it was probably because he had introduced this topic in one of his letters to a brother preacher then at Grimsby, that he received the following sketch :—

*March 10th, 1788.*

DEAR BROTHER, \* \* \*

\* \* \* I will now draw you a picture of a Preacher's wife.—1. She must be a woman of solid piety ; or she will be a burden to her husband, and a stumbling block to others. 2. She must be well established in the Methodist Doctrine, and zealous for our discipline ; else there will be danger of her doing harm among the people. 3. She should be a woman of gifts as well as grace, able to preach by the fire-side and in the class, or by a sick bed, as her husband is in the pulpit. 4. She should have a good natural disposition ; else should she fall from grace, she will be a very devil. 5. She must be of a free open spirit ; if not, the people will dislike her, and perhaps the husband too for her sake ; yet she must be able to keep a secret, and not shew too great freedom with the

other sex. 6. She must be of a meek spirit, to bear contradictions, which she must expect to meet with. 7. Of a humble spirit ; or she will take too much on herself. 8. Possessed of christian fortitude ; or she will sink under trials. 9. Zealous and active, that she may be useful wherever she goes. 10. Generous, without prodigality. 11. Notable and frugal, without covetousness. 12. Cleanly, both in her house and apparel. 13. Exceedingly exemplary in her dress, not using gaudy nor costly apparel ; if she does, her husband need never say one word against dress, as it will be all lost labour. 14. Fully reconciled to a travelling life ; or she will be perpetually teasing her husband to settle, and never let him rest till he yields to her intreaties. 15. It would be well if she had a good constitution, that the husband may not be hindered in the business of the Circuit by nursing his sick wife. 16. If to all these good properties, she have as much fortune as will maintain herself, her husband, and children, if need be, she will be no worse but better. I hope you will be cautious how you take such a step ; much prayer, with fasting and perfect resignation to the will of God, is necessary in such an important affair. That the Lord may direct you in all things, and prosper you in every prudent engagement, is the earnest prayer of

Your affectionate brother,

WM. C. FISH.

This portrait was sent to Mr. Kilham within a few days of his marriage with Miss Sarah Grey, of Pickering, with whom, until her death, which occurred in 1797, he enjoyed as much happiness as sound piety, eminent good sense, and, perhaps, as great a share of affection and care for his welfare as ever was shown by woman, could secure. In justice to her memory, as well as because they are connected with some parts of Mr. Kilham's public conduct, several of Mrs. Kilham's letters will be given hereafter, and they will shew the deep interest which she took in whatever concerned him, both as her husband and as a minister of the gospel. Mr. Kilham records his marriage in these words :—

“I had long entertained the wish of entering into the marriage state, but as my situation laid me under many difficulties, particularly in regard to the fitness

of the person for a wife, I had been hitherto prevented from forming a suitable matrimonial connexion. I had made this a matter of earnest prayer to God, and had intreated his direction in an affair of so much importance : I wished to act with the greatest caution, and to have resignation to the Divine will, and not to take that step, which so immediately affected my happiness, without using all possible prudence and circumspection. Some time after I came into this circuit, a particular friend pointed out Miss S. Grey to me, and told me he thought she would make me a proper companion, and supposed she would have no great objection.\* \* \* \* \* I was thankful to God for his goodness to me in this particular, and I believed from my heart, that the Lord had graciously pointed her out as a companion for me. I have frequently found my heart overwhelmed with gratitude and love to Him, for giving me such a help-mate, for her whole study has been to glorify God, and render herself agreeable to me. My heart has always been deeply affected, on account of this undeserved mercy and love so richly manifested in this instance to me, who am infinitely beneath His notice. He has given me a partner, in whom I find all the qualities I ever desired, and many others which I never looked for. Instead of her being my cross, she is the delight of my eyes, whom, under God, I love, and ever shall love, and highly esteem, to use the expression, as my own soul. I have no hindrance from her in the blessed work of the Lord, but am encouraged by her advice and example, to be diligent in the Lord's vineyard. I hope this unspeakable mercy will fill my soul with gratitude, and cause my mouth to speak the praises of God."

They were married at Pickering on Easter Monday, 1788, with the sanction of Mr. Wesley, whose consent had always to be procured by the preachers before they ventured on such a step. The propriety of this will be perceived in the relation in which he stood to the preachers and to the body—as the father of both ; in the honour of the community, which lay near his heart ; and in the general knowledge he had of the

members of the society,—enabling him to decide and give advice on the subject of suitability.

Mrs. Kilham having brought a small property to her husband, he never, during the whole time that he travelled as a preacher, received any quarterage for her; a proof, if such were wanting, of his disinterestedness, and that while his object was to render as much service as he could to the cause of religion, he was wishful to put the societies to as little expense as possible for his maintenance.

In August this year, Mr. Kilham addressed a letter to the Duke of Leeds, in consequence of the improper conduct of his grace's steward, in having taken upon himself to discharge one of his workmen—not, as the man was assured at the moment of his being turned away, that there was any charge against him as a servant, but because he had become a Methodist. The same person had also behaved outrageously to Mr. Kilham, while attempting to preach in the Town Street of Seamer, by pulling the chair on which he was standing from under him, pushing him down, and throwing filth, eggs, &c., upon him. In addition to these acts of persecution, the steward procured warrants against several of the congregation, who, with the preacher, appeared before the magistrates at Pickering. On the case being gone into, however, the facts told so plainly against the real offender, that not only were the parties who had been summoned discharged without censure, but a constable who had been present during part of the time when these interruptions were going forward, and had refused to interfere to keep the peace, was fined for his neglect of duty. Mr. Kilham's first intention seems to have been, to have taken legal proceedings against the steward for the assault, as it is found by his papers that he laid the case before counsel, and obtained an opinion upon it in his favour; but the steward having threatened to dismiss other workmen, for whom there could have been no legal redress, and otherwise to oppose the preaching at that place, Mr. Kilham, looking only to the interest of religion, judged it expedient so far to lose sight of the outrage

committed against himself, as not to have recourse to law in the first instance, but rather to draw up a statement of the steward's conduct generally in the affair. This he did, and submitted it to the Duke, with some suitable remarks on the subject of liberty of conscience; and his grace probably signified his pleasure in a proper way, as it appears no repetition of such conduct as that just described ever took place at Seamer.

While in the Scarborough circuit, Mr. Kilham was invited by a congregation of Dissenters, who had a chapel at Helmsley, to become their settled minister, with the offer of a comfortable maintenance if he would do so. This he declined, alleging that he could not leave Mr. Wesley's Connexion with a good conscience; but at the same time proposed to them, if they wished to sit under the Methodist preachers, that their chapel should be regularly supplied according to the itinerant plan. It was so supplied for some time, but the majority being in favour of a fixed resident minister, this arrangement did not continue to be followed.

In December, Mr. Kilham's first child was born—a daughter, who was named Sarah;\* and he states that himself and Mrs. Kilham solemnly offered up their infant to the Lord to be his for ever.

About this time he has the following entry in his diary:—"I preached at two places on Sunday; at one of them the people behaved very well, and were attentive, but at the other were very rude. I was informed a few days after, that half-a-pound of gunpowder was put under the place where I was expected to stand, with a train secretly laid to some distance; but, without having any reason for the change, I stood in another place. I have reason in this instance to say, I will praise thy name, O Lord! thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth."

In attending to that part of a minister's duty which requires him to visit the sick, Mr. Kilham had the

\* Now Mrs. Biller, of St. Petersburg, who has for many years conducted a school in the Russian capital, under the immediate inspection and patronage of the Imperial family. She was the only one of Mr. Kilham's children who survived her parents.

satisfaction of finding good reason to hope that in this circuit he was made the means of bringing an individual to a knowledge of salvation, when on the very threshold of eternity. He was requested to visit a young female in Scarborough, who was fast sinking under a consumption; and on calling, she was found to be unacquainted with spiritual things, and indisposed to speak or be spoken to on the subject, and was even prejudiced against him. Still, however, he persevered in his visits, and by prayer and conversation he soon witnessed a rapid change in her mind;—indifference was succeeded by a deep concern for her soul—repentance followed—and, finally, having been enabled to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, she obtained pardon through him, and died rejoicing in the assurance of heaven. Mr. Kilham improved the circumstance by preaching a funeral sermon to a large congregation.

Having been two years at Scarborough, the Conference which he attended at Leeds, in 1789, removed Mr. Kilham to Pocklington, a neighbouring circuit. It is one advantage of the itinerant plan, that, in changing the scene of his ministry, a preacher is almost invariably led to renew his resolutions, and revise his schemes for usefulness, so that by often commencing his work afresh, and with accumulated knowledge and experience, his zeal is kept up, and he labours with better effect than he would be likely to do, provided he continued in one place, and with the same people. We find, accordingly, that Mr. Kilham, to use his own words, when he repaired to his new circuit, “devoted himself to God again,” resolving, at the same time, “to be more diligent in improving his time in reading and writing.” This purpose was practically fulfilled, and he appears to have been from this time closely engaged in the perusal of ecclesiastical history, and in investigating theological truth generally. His desire was first to know, that he might afterwards prove all things, and hold fast that which was good. He says,—“I find a great thirst after knowledge, and am occupied in reading many authors on various subjects; I have been so much engaged in

these employments, that I have scarcely had time for my usual seasons of private prayer and meditation. I have also been much engaged in writing letters and skeletons of sermons. I sometimes find a great backwardness to these exercises, but when I take up my cross, I frequently afterwards find them a great blessing to me. I begin often with great aversion, and afterwards proceed with pleasure and satisfaction."

If we feel regret that such scenes as the following, which were of almost weekly occurrence forty or fifty years ago, have to be noticed, it ought not to be unaccompanied with thankfulness that they are rarely or never witnessed in our own day:—"I went to preach at L—, at four o'clock on Sunday; the minister came to the house, and demanded by what authority I came there. When I told him, he spoke against the Methodists in the most bitter language, and threatened vengeance against us if we persisted in our meeting,—saying, it was at our peril if we proceeded.

"An old man, with a prayer-book under his arm, came also and abused me, using very scurrilous terms: the house was in an uproar, there being a considerable congregation, and many from the neighbouring villages were present. I began by singing a hymn, but before we had finished the minister came again, with a short stick in his hand, and rushing through the people, came boldly up to me; he pushed against me, and attempted to strike me with his stick, but a farmer laid hold of him, and prevented it; he then used abusive language, and even gnashed with his teeth, commanding us repeatedly to desist. I appealed to his conscience, and to his people, whether he acted according to the spirit of the gospel. At length, finding that nothing he could say would prevent our meeting, he and his companion went away. Soon after, two or three servants came with eggs to throw at the people, but few of them did us any injury: we were afterwards left to conclude without further molestation."

The Pocklington circuit was extensive, and required the preachers to be almost continually absent from their families, the round taking them six weeks to travel it,



during which time they could spare only five or six nights at home; yet he was content, and even happy, if the work of religion did but prosper, as was the case in some places, for which he expressed his gratitude to God.

It would seem, however, from Mr. Kilham's correspondence with his friends, while in the Pocklington circuit, that the coldness and formality in regard to religion, which too generally prevailed amongst the people, gave him much concern and uneasiness. He had some evidence of his not having preached in vain, but on the whole he was far from satisfied with the state of the societies. There was too little spiritual energy amongst them, and no means which he could devise had the effect of rousing them to earnest and laborious service in the cause of God. He only remained one year in Pocklington, though he was warmly pressed by the circuit to stay a second; nor does he appear to have felt any great objection against returning; but, not having been the assistant or superintendent that year, the Conference held at Bristol, 1790, as a matter of course removed him, and he was appointed to Whitby circuit, where, he says, he found an agreeable and affectionate people, amongst whom he lived and laboured with great satisfaction. In a letter to a friend, soon after his arrival in this circuit, he gives, among other things, the following particulars respecting the state of religion at Whitby:—

When we arrived at Whitby, we met with a kind reception from the friends. After I had spent two or three days in the town, I went to my proper place in the circuit. The people came with great readiness to hear the new preacher. I found my mind a good deal refreshed; but there is a great want of life in many souls. We have about 250 in society at Whitby: most of them meet in band. We have preaching three mornings in the week by us; the other mornings a local preacher supplies, or they have a prayer meeting. We have an intercession on Friday at 12 o'clock, and a public prayer meeting every Saturday evening. Many of the friends are greatly encouraged to hope for a revival. Several of our places lie upon the sea-coast. The people in general are guilty of smuggling in those places. We have but poor societies in them, because of our not countenancing

that vice. I find, after going four times round the circuit, the congregations as good, or better than before. I find my mind more spiritual, and my heart more engaged in the work. I am not satisfied with the good word of the people, unless I can see some fruit of my labour. My whole soul is engaged for God. I am sure I desire nothing in preaching but to save myself and others. I have many corruptions which war against the peace of my soul. Many temptations are thrown in my way, from various quarters. The Lord teaches me, in some measure, when to fight, and when to fly.

I am, in truth,  
Your affectionate Brother in Christ,  
ALEXR. KILHAM.

Mr. Kilham was a sincere believer in the truth of the doctrine of general redemption, as held by Mr. Wesley and the Methodists, and, while in this circuit, he felt it his duty, on more than one occasion, to stand forth to advocate and recommend it, in opposition to the Calvinistic system which was taught by several ministers in Whitby, and other places which they visited. His motive for addressing one of the preachers of these doctrines, he explains, as well as the object of his writing to him, in a letter from which we may give an extract:—

REV. SIR,

*Sept. 6, 1790.*

I hope you will pardon the freedom I have taken, in addressing you with these lines. You frequently express in the pulpit the desire you have of doing good as a preacher of the Gospel, and the grief that pervades your soul on account of your having little or no success. It appears by what you say, you would do any thing in your power to save souls from eternal death. I am a little surprised at your grief, when I consider you as a strong predestinarian. You often inform your congregation of God's everlasting love to the elect, of his determination to bring them through all to glory, of their being in a state beyond the reach of men and devils, &c. You imply in your doctrine, though seldom fully express it, that the greatest part of the world are reprobates. You confine the merits of Christ to the elect, and solemnly declare none shall miss of happiness who have been redeemed by his blood. You mourn on account of so few attending

the word, and grieve that those who do attend continue hardened in sin. You blame their conduct, and cry with all your might against their proceedings. Yet you acknowledge they cannot alter their conduct without an effectual call, and that that effectual call must come from sovereign grace, which is the purchase of the Redeemer's blood. Now, if grace be not provided, the call cannot be given; if that be allowed, the sinner must perish in his sin, of necessity. Pray, sir, who is to blame? \* \* \* If you would open your heart, and preach a free and full salvation to all, laying all the blame of rebellion and future misery upon the sinner's own head, you would be blessed in your soul, and owned in your labours. God is my witness, I write with sincere affection, and with an earnest desire of real good. Let me beg of you not to speak so much upon controverted points, but lay the axe to the root in every sermon. Do not charge your brother ministers with doctrines they never hold. They place no more merit in good works than you can do; nor do they in any sense look on them as meritorious. Do not despise their private meetings: they are consistent with the Bible and sound reason. Many clergymen hold them, and are much blest in their parishes. Wishing from my heart your spiritual good and welfare, and praying earnestly for your labours to be crowned with success, I conclude by expressing myself

Your affectionate servant, &c.

The following contains an abstract of his faith in the general doctrines of the gospel, and was sent, as he states in a note, to a party whom he supposed to have been the writer of an anonymous letter which he received, charging the Methodist preachers with teaching their hearers to build on a wrong foundation.

\* \* \* If you were to read over Mr. Wesley's sermons, and consult his other works, you would find he lays the same foundation St. Paul does in his 3rd chap. to the Corinthians, 1st Ep. We follow the steps of our aged father, and constantly declare there is no other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved. We constantly declare that man is fallen and corrupt through body, soul, and spirit; that his corrupt nature leads to wickedness in his life and conversation; that all his own works, be they ever so specious, are dead works before God; that, of himself, he is incapable of thinking, speaking, and acting, in any sense,

to please God ; that he is a vile sinner, condemned already ; that he has no will nor power to save himself, in whole or part ; that he will be damned and ruined if he continue in his present state. To encourage such, we constantly inform them, that God is loving to all—wills not the death of any sinner, but had rather they would return and live ; that Christ has died for all—tasted death for every man ; has paid down the price of redemption for the world—has fully atoned for all sin, and for every sinner. We tell them the Spirit is given—that he strives with all—that he convinces of sin, of righteousness, &c.—that he waits to take the things of Christ, and communicate them to the soul. We hold, that the grace of God appears to all—that every man has a free will through grace—that all have calls and help offered to repent, believe in Christ, and be saved—that now is the accepted time and day of salvation. We also insist upon it, that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin—that the Spirit roots out hellish, and plants heavenly tempers in the soul—that he gives faith that works by love, and purifies the heart. He creates anew in Christ to good works. We declare to our people, they ought to be living sacrifices to God—to seek a full recovery in Christ, that they may be a peculiar people, zealous of good works—to cleanse themselves from all filthiness, perfecting holiness in the fear of God ; that they should daily be lights in the world—show their faith by their works ; that they are to grow up in Christ—press toward the mark—be exceedingly earnest in striving to keep a conscience void of offence ; that they are daily to watch and pray—follow Christ fully, and to the end. We inform them, if they act thus, after their conversion, they shall never fall, but shall grow stronger and stronger every day. We caution them against sin, against lukewarmness ; declare they may fall into sin and into hell—that they will be reprobate and cast off from God, unless they hold fast the beginning of their confidence to the end. We ascribe, justly, rationally, and scripturally, all glory to God for man's salvation, in every sense : and we likewise declare, with the same evidence, that all who lose their souls will have none to blame but themselves. These are the doctrines we hold and maintain, both in preaching and writing. We can prove them from Scripture, and from the clearest evidence manifested in the experiences of christians in all ages.

I apprehend the foundation you refer to, is election and reprobation, as maintained by the people called Calvinists.

This foundation being unscriptural, we dare not build upon it. We cannot represent the Author of our being as willing and bringing about the damnation of the greatest part of mankind, without any possibility of their escape. Were we to hold this foundation, we should necessarily make God the author of all sin ; should show that all are equally doing his will ; that there is nothing in the world but a consistency with the appointments of the Deity ; and that all is harmoniously moving by his necessitating influence.

I am,

Your affectionate friend,

ALEXR. KILHAM.

Having received from a young man belonging to a methodist family in the Pocklington circuit, and for whose salvation he had felt great concern, an account of his conversion, which had recently taken place, Mr. Kilham, at his request, sent an answer containing much excellent advice, with judicious cautions, which persons just setting out in the christian life always need, but have rarely the means of obtaining from persons of competent skill and long standing in religion.

*Whitby, 6th January, 1791.*

DEAR BROTHER,

I received your kind and welcome letter last night, about nine o'clock. My wife and I rejoiced at the mercy of God, manifested to you in the Lord Jesus. I am glad to find your experience rational and scriptural. You have long had light in your understanding, but have now gained life in your soul. God has graciously heard prayer in your behalf. Many fervent petitions have been put up to God for your conversion ; those prayers have been watered with tears ; God has at last answered ;—to his name be all the praise. I would have you daily adore the riches of divine goodness vouchsafed in Christ Jesus. According to your desire, I will gladly communicate a few things, which I hope will be useful. I would have you spend much time in secret prayer and reading the Scriptures ; read much with the excellent commentary which your father lately purchased. Read, if you have time, all the lives of the preachers and others published in the magazines from the beginning. Indulge yourself as little as possible with any thing that is unnecessary.

Rise early to your prayers and other duties. I would also advise you to be diligent in attending upon all prayer meetings; and when you have opportunity to pray publicly, embrace it; but avoid a forwardness in this, which would be censured by some. I do not mean you should be backward, but be modest and prudent, as becomes a person of your years. If the Lord help you, you may give a short exhortation at a prayer meeting; but avoid being long: you had better speak only five minutes to edification, than half an hour to weary the people. If you would go into the country with our friends, it might be attended with good. There you might speak without reserve; you must not be astonished if some of the old methodists oppose your proceedings. My own father opposed me more than any person I met with; but his opposition arose from a good principle. He feared I should run before I was sent, but when he saw I was called to the work, he ceased, saying, the will of the Lord be done. However, the Lord is on your side, and if you ask wisdom and council of him he will direct you in all things. You may depend upon it, the devil will do all he can to prevent your prosperity. He will strive by various ways to seduce you from the hope of the gospel. You must look for him as an angel of light. He will strive to make you think more highly of yourself than you ought. He will get you to look upon old professors as possessed of less experience than yourself, and will use many artful methods to make you fall into condemnation. I make no doubt but you will find many corrupt principles rise up in your soul, jointly striving to allure you from your God. Though the Lord has done great things for you, yet it is likely *even now* you are much unacquainted with the plague of your own heart; when suitable temptations offer, you will know what remains of corruption in your soul. However, whatever arises in your heart contrary to God, you may with great confidence seek the removal of it by the spirit of holiness. Internal holiness is the beauty of christianity. It adorns the soul and makes us like God. It qualifies us for every good word and work. I believe by your account God has given you a great release; but do not be angry with me for suggesting to you that much of your heart is yet unknown. Many roots of bitterness yet lodge in your breast undiscovered. If you do not like this doctrine, it proves my point, and witnesses there is yet pride in your breast. I do not want to weaken your confidence,

but to lead you out of yourself entirely to the Lord Jesus. The disease must be known before the cure can commence. Often examine your heart, and you will soon perceive what arises there contrary to the meekness and lowliness that is in Jesus. Whatever you find an enemy to your peace, bring it by faith before God, and he will slay it. I would have you beware not to act the part of a vessel that lately sailed from this port, with about half-a-score hands on board ; for want of ballast, in a gale of wind she was over-set, and all hands perished. You have launched out into the ocean of religion. You have spread your sails of profession extensively. The winds will blow from unfavourable quarters, and if you are not well ballasted with deep humility, you will be over-set in the gale, and all your grace will perish. Sink deep into the valley, and that will cause you to rise high before God and sensible men. You can never think too meanly of yourself. This will help all your duties, and will make your soul constantly to depend implicitly upon God. This is a cardinal grace. It will adorn your soul in all places and engagements. I would advise you to get a book with about four hundred pages in it, and take skeletons from the sermons you hear preached. You may retain the general and particular heads if you are attentive. I would have you use your own judgment in this. If you find any thing that appears superfluous, cut it off. If any thing is wanting, supply it. If the Lord never call you to preach, this method will be useful. But should you be called to a public life, (which I hope will be the case,) you will find the skeletons of real use. I do not mean they will be able to furnish your mind with what is necessary to preach, but they will be helpful. If you will but employ your time, you will have none to spare for any thing trifling. I would have you buy Dr. Watt's Improvement of the Mind (in both parts,) and read it over as soon as you possibly can. Do not read it once only, but again and again. It is one of the best books you can read for improvement. Beg of God to give you an understanding heart. Intreat him to open your capacity that you may understand the Scriptures. The more true wisdom you gain, the more you will see into your own ignorance. May the God of Jacob be your defence, Amen.

ALEXR. KILHAM.

The next letter was addressed to the Rev. John Grundell, who, though deprived of his sight, was a

popular preacher, and went out to travel in the Methodist New Connexion shortly after it was formed in 1797.\*

*Whitby, 17th January, 1791.*

DEAR BROTHER,

For several weeks I withstood the temptation you left in our house, but at last was overcome by unwatchfulness. I sought up all the keys we had, and happily the last succeeded. I then came at a sight of your books, and had the pleasure of perusing some of the most valuable. I made this vow to myself,—“I will read no letters, nor suffer myself to look at any thing I find in his box which I have reason to suppose he wants to be kept secret.” I kept my vow religiously. Booth Newton met me at Stokesley. He told me you had sent him the key of your box, and had given him liberty to read your books. As you had sent no word to Whitby, I would not send the box away at that time. However, I let him have a few volumes with a strict charge to keep them clean, and be careful not to hurt the binding. Since I saw you, I have had various exercises in different ways. The people hear with great seriousness and attention, but we do not win over many to Christ. I find a very kind reception throughout the circuit; many hear in most places, but few appear to lay to heart what is delivered. \* \* \* I thank God for the privileges I enjoy in this place, particularly for access to the gentleman’s library. I am as much or more devoted to reading than ever. I hope I improve something by every book I read. \* \* \* I am open to truth from any—from every quarter. I have read Burnett’s Treatise on the Resurrection. Mr. Shelton recommended it to me on your word. He is a curious writer. His Theory of the Earth contains many things rational, and some not a little extraordinary. I cannot take time to animadvert on the authors I have been pleased and profited by. We have a few intelligent friends here. Your name is precious to many souls in this place. I am glad to find several who own you for their father in the Gospel. I hope, my dear brother, your late route has been a blessing to yourself, and a season of good to many souls. I find it difficult to live and preach in the spirit of the Gospel. It is easy to preach to satisfy most who hear, but it is hard to persuade men to flee from

\* Mr. Grundell died at North Shields, Dec. 1, 1815, and on the 5th of the same month, was buried near the pulpit of the Methodist New Connexion Chapel, Sunderland, of which town he was a native.



the wrath to come. I lay the axe to the root as much as possible, but I cannot bring sinners to God without the divine energy of his spirit accompanying the word to the consciences of the people. I hope I am more serious than when I saw you. I find great need of universal holiness to make me truly careful. \* \* \* Wishing you every blessing purchased by the blood of the covenant that you are capable of receiving, I am, with the utmost truth and sincerity of affection,

Your affectionate Brother in the Gospel of Christ,

A. KILHAM.

In March, Mr. Kilham's second child was born, and named Samuel, having been, like the first, which was then more than two years old, solemnly devoted to the service and disposal of God. The birth of this son occasioned some altercation between Mr. Kilham and one of the leading men in the Whitby society, who being warmly attached to the Church, urged, and even insisted upon Mrs. Kilham going there to return thanks, and also that the child should be baptised by the clergyman. Mr. Kilham objected on principle, maintaining that as a dissenter it would be inconsistent to have recourse to the Establishment on such an occasion. This gave some offence at the moment, but nothing personally unpleasant appears to have followed.

The next letter, to R. C. Brackenbury, Esq., embodies many of the feelings peculiar to a faithful minister of the gospel; and being written confidentially, without the least expectation of its coming under the eye of any one besides the individual to whom it was sent, it helps to give us a better insight into the disposition and religious character of its author than could be obtained by a more elaborate communication. The impression necessarily produced by the persual of Mr. Kilham's private correspondence, is highly favourable to his piety and zeal in the work of God.

*Whitby, 5th March, 1791.*

DEAR SIR,

\* \* \* \* \*

I have not in the least remitted my diligence in redeeming time, nor my self-denial in the work, since I entered into a

marriage state. I have every blessing from a partner that the creature can afford. I have no hindrance but help from her in the way to heaven. Yet in the midst of blessings of various sorts, I do not render the Lord such returns as he requires. I accepted my appointment here with thankfulness, and came with great cheerfulness to labour in this circuit. I met with a cordial reception from the people in every place. They received me as a messenger sent from God, and do still come with remarkable readiness to hear me. I have a kind, serious, upright colleague, whose heart and soul are in the work. We are in our third year together, and have known nothing but love. In the midst of these most extraordinary privileges I am not sufficiently grateful to the Giver. I do not find my heart at all times submissive to him in all things. I do surrender body, soul, spirit, &c., freely unto him, but do not gain that conformity to him, and holiness, which appear so exceedingly desirable. I am convinced, by multiplied experience as well as observation, that unless Christ dwell in our heart by his spirit, and become the soul of our soul, moving all the motions of our heart and life, it is impossible to live to God. I have not the least dependence upon gifts and graces, any further than they are managed by the spirit of God, living and reigning in the heart. My whole dependence is upon God for success in preaching the word. I go out in his fear and name; and according to my ability speak to the consciences of all who attend. I direct my discourse to the people before me, and frequently inform them of the consequence of refusing the testimony of the Lord. God does in some places own my word with success. I have seen the travail of my Redeemer's soul, and am a little satisfied. Last night, at a village near this place, a woman stood up, after preaching, and informed the congregation that God had set her soul at liberty. Another stopped in the society, and declared God had powerfully awakened his conscience while I was preaching. I rejoiced, and do rejoice on that account. Though God has not left us without witness in many places, yet our labours have not been attended with much success. Our own people are exceedingly remiss in self-denial and conformity to Christ. We have few that are reaching to the things that are before. This place, that has been noted for the piety of the society, is fixed in lukewarmness; I mean great numbers who are joined with us here, have not the power of godliness. I tell you in the confidence of friendship, that I never was among a people who

have less of the mind that was in Christ, and the zeal that becomes his followers. We cannot prevail on them to renounce the world and self, and be fully engaged for God. \* \* \* I hope God will manifest his love, and come powerfully among us. I believe, could those of us who preach the gospel prevail on ourselves to live and act as messengers of the Lord, we should soon see the devil's kingdom giving way to the kingdom of Christ. I cannot expect to be useful to many, till I gain a greater renewal of soul. Were I in the holy of holiness myself, to burn and shine like a seraphim in holy living and love to all, I believe my labours would be greatly blessed. There appears a veil between this state and my soul; I am wishing and praying that the veil may be rent, and my soul speedily admitted. I find faith exceeding necessary to admit the soul into the depths of God. Unless faith carry the soul out of self and the world, and lead her to live in God as her proper element, the divine nature cannot be received, and its fruits manifested in the heart and life. \* \* \* We were struck yesterday with the tidings of the death of Mr. Wesley. God is wise in all his ways, and holy in all his works. I hope he will raise up men to superintend, full of faith and the Holy Ghost. \* \* \* If he suffer any revolutions to take place, they will be guided by infinite wisdom, to ends most for the glory of God and good of souls.

I am, your affectionate servant,

ALEXR. KILHAM.

Mr. Wesley's death, which Mr. Kilham notices in the foregoing letter, occurred in London on the 2nd of March, 1791. The intelligence occasioned great mourning throughout his societies, and funeral sermons were preached in all the chapels belonging to the Connexion. Mr. Kilham mentions having delivered one to a crowded congregation at Whitby.

## CHAPTER IV.

FROM MARCH, 1791, TO AUGUST, 1792, WHEN MR. KILHAM WAS TRIED BY THE CONFERENCE, AND CENSURED FOR PUBLISHING AN ADDRESS TO THE FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF THE NEWCASTLE SOCIETY.

THE proceedings of the preachers and of the societies immediately on the death of Mr. Wesley, serve to illustrate the circumstances in which they understood themselves to have been placed by that event. That all parties expected to be put in possession of power, and to enjoy privileges superior to what they had held during the lifetime of the founder of Methodism, is unquestionable. They, in fact, regarded themselves as having outlived their minority, but their notions were vague and undefined as to the precise benefits which they should acquire by the change. This remark applies to the preachers as well as to the people: the former seemed to associate with the advantage of being freed from the restraint\* put upon them by Mr. Wesley,

\* It is clear from the conduct of the preachers that they did not at that time consider themselves entitled to the entire government of the Connexion; nor, indeed, did they profess to aim at this: hence the people were allowed to meet and adopt such resolutions as they judged expedient, in reference to the Connexion, and even the Conference, without their right to do so ever being called in question. The trustees and societies acted and spoke as having paramount authority; and the preachers seemed intent only on two things—first, to perpetuate the itinerant plan; second, to prevent any one or a few of themselves from monopolizing the supremacy. Mr. Wesley had told them, that the people would never submit to them after his death as they had submitted to him; and they probably believed this, and were apparently only desirous of securing themselves against oppression from each other. After this object had been attained, then it was that step after step was taken to set aside the influence and power, first of the trustees, and then of the societies. Were the process by which this was accomplished fully and impartially delineated, it would be found amongst the most curious and instructive, and perhaps important, chapters connected with modern ecclesiastical history. As indispensable qualifications, however, for executing such a task, the individual undertaking it must have been of some standing in the Methodist ministry, fully initiated into Conference proceedings, and have sufficient sagacity to mark the connection between

an opinion that the position in which they should be individually placed in the Connexion, depended mainly on their own immediate conduct and exertions. This gave rise to numerous intrigues and meetings, for the purpose of securing their own influence at the ensuing Conference, when something would of course have to be decided upon as to the future management of the Connexion. The societies likewise met in many places, not doubting that they were entitled to deliberate on what would be likely to promote their interest, and that of the body at large, at such an important juncture. A correspondence was opened between the various circuits, and letters and pamphlets were written and disseminated, with a view to direct attention to those points which were deemed to be of moment. There was, in short, a general movement throughout the societies in every part of the kingdom, accompanied by no small degree of jealousy amongst the different sections into which the Methodists were divided.

In tracing the history of every community, whether spiritual or political, it will be found universally true, that controversies which have ultimately developed and established great principles of government, have hardly ever originated in immediate connection with any thing in its nature affecting the foundations of society. Disputes, having for their object the reformation of abuses, have generally, at their commencement, been

certain measures of policy operating silently and imperceptibly, yet with the utmost certainty, working by degrees such changes upon the societies as were sought to be effected, but which, if they had been directly and openly attempted, it would have been impossible to have produced. No such historian has yet appeared amongst the Methodists: it is indeed remarkable, that from the time of Mr. Kilham until recently, when Dr. Warren began to point out some of the arbitrary features in the system, hardly an individual preacher had written and published, or even uttered, any thing on the subject in this country. In America, during the last few years, some able pieces have been produced on the principles of Methodistical government, which deserve to be better known than they are in England. A periodical work, begun at Baltimore in 1825, under the title of "The mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church," ought to be particularly mentioned, as displaying great research and power of argument, in asserting the claims of the laity to participate with the preachers in the legislative and governing functions of the religious community.

about secondary things—such as a particular measure adopted by those in authority; some apparently trifling circumstance in the administration of affairs; or even the tone and manner of an official individual. Contention being thus begun, the parties therein engaged, in order to rest their arguments and objections on something solid, have, in the course of investigation, been obliged to refer to and open out the doctrine of abstract rights,—to ascertain and define the relations of men to each other,—and to limit the powers of different classes under the social union. In studying a physical science, the plan is to begin by acquainting ourselves with its general principles, and then to pursue it in its details. But the reverse of this is the case with regard to government, and things pertaining to common life; and the reason is plain,—men are more interested in what they see and feel, than they can be with theoretical propositions. It is therefore seldom that they are brought to pay attention to them, until something occurs which immediately affects their own welfare. Directly that a benefit is arbitrarily withheld, or an act of oppression practised upon them, the hardship is understood; and while seeking its removal, if the conduct they complain of be persevered in and justified, the difficulties thrown in their way occasion them to enquire into the nature of that power which can inflict such injury. On finding it to have been exercised without authority, or used in an extreme degree, they are led to contend against it, not merely because it has wronged themselves, but on higher grounds; namely, that it is unreasonable, and opposed to the well-being of society. It will be found, in conformity with the remarks just made, that the disputes which were carried on in the Methodist Connexion for several years after Mr. Wesley's death, related at first to minor points, but at length they assumed a more important character; and the division in the body to which they led, took place in consequence of the assertion of a great principle brought out in the course of the inquiries which were made, and which the Conference would not allow to be

acted upon. That principle was, the scriptural right of the laity to be present at all meetings, and to assist in making laws for the government of the Connexion. Mr. Kilham took part with the people in this contention;\* and maintained their cause until, for so doing, he was expelled from the body by the Conference held in London, in 1796.

Mr. Kilham was first led to take up his pen in consequence of the following letter having been circulated by the trustees at Hull, to the stewards of the larger societies in Mr. Wesley's Connexion; the object of

\* Early in October, 1798, only a little more than two months before he died, Mr. Kilham, in a preliminary notice to "An Appeal to the Methodist Societies in the Sheffield Circuit," (occasioned by some aspersions having been cast on him,) which he prepared for publication, but which it appears was not printed, expresses himself in the following eloquent and affecting terms, in reference to what he had been obliged to endure in consequence of his efforts to promote a reformation in the religious community to which he belonged. The passage is transcribed from a manuscript now before us in his own hand writing.—"When I first wrote against the abuses and corruptions of the Methodist Connexion, some of my friends imagined I should receive the thanks of the Conference, and every thing be set right at once; but I had read ecclesiastical history, and a different prospect opened to my view. Since the conflict began, I have been represented as weak and insane—as mad—as possessed of the devil—as given up to a reprobate mind—as the greatest deceiver and hypocrite upon the face of the earth—as the man of sin which the scriptures mention—as a devil with a bible under my arm—yea, as worse than the devil. In a discourse delivered about a week ago, the travelling preacher confessed one article of his faith to be this—"I believe Mr. Kilham is that man, that he would prefer a high place in hell before a low place in heaven." These, and a thousand other things, have been said of me by the preachers, and those who are subject to them in all things;—many pray, and expect to be answered, that God would hasten my destruction. They quote this passage to justify their conduct: "I would to God that they were cut off who trouble you." If I had lived at the dawn of the Reformation, such declarations, from persons so exalted in profession, might have alarmed my poor conscience. But at present my heart rejoices in being counted worthy to suffer for the sake of Christ and his religion. I believe priestcraft, branched out into the different nations, and prevailing in almost every country, if not in every sect and party, is the greatest curse that ever God Almighty suffered to befall his creatures—and until it is removed, the nations will groan, being oppressed. Could I give a deadly blow to one hair of this seven-headed monster, I should think it amply rewarded all my sufferings. If I could live to the age of Methusalem, and be fed every day with the bread and water of affliction, I should exceedingly rejoice if I could, in all those years, be instrumental in banishing this evil from the face of the earth."

which was threefold, namely,—to prevail upon the Methodists—1st. Not to profess themselves Dissenters; 2nd. Not to establish worship in Church hours; 3rd. To repair to the Church for the purpose of receiving the sacrament.

*“Hull, 4th May, 1791.*

“DEAR BRETHREN,

“Although we cannot but condole with you on the great loss which the Methodist societies in particular, and the christian world in general, have sustained in the death of our venerable and honoured father, the Rev. J. Wesley; yet we rejoice with you that he has left us a testimony that God was with him, even to the last period of his long and eminently useful life.

“We pray that unity and peace may still prevail among the preachers and people in the Methodist societies, and that God may pour out of his spirit more abundantly among us. And as a measure that may be for the furtherance of the gospel, and the comfort and encouragement of many of the Methodist preachers, we cannot but recommend to our brethren, of the larger societies especially, to unite in declaring, by letter or otherwise, to all the preachers, their determination, through grace, to adhere to all those rules, both with regard to doctrine and discipline, which our departed father and pastor established among us, and which have been blessed with such signal marks of divine favour. We are all convinced, the usefulness of the Methodists has been, and will be greatly increased by their continuance in connection with the church of England; and we believe, as did the late Rev. Mr. Wesley, those of them who separate from the church of England, ‘will dwindle away into a dry, dull, separate party.’

“We cannot consent to have the sacrament administered amongst us by the Methodist preachers, nor to have preaching in the chapel here during the hours of divine service in the church;—and we most cordially unite with the Conference in support of that annual or frequent change of preachers, which has been so great a blessing both to preachers and people, and one great mean of preserving and increasing vital religion among the Methodists. So far as your sentiments agree with ours in these important matters, we shall rejoice and esteem it a presage of future good.

“We wish you every blessing which the Saviour of sinners



has purchased for us; and praying that we may meet you in the kingdom above, we remain

Your affectionate brethren in the gospel,

|                  |                   |                  |
|------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| THOMAS GOOD,     | GEORGE WALTON,    | JOHN HARRUP,     |
| WILLIAM KELSEY,  | JOSEPH GEE,       | JOHN FOX,        |
| GEORGE WILSON,   | RICHARD TERNY,    | GEORGE MILLS,    |
| WILLIAM HEADLEY, | WM. RAMSDEN,      | WILLIAM OMBLER,  |
| SAMUEL KING,     | WILLIAM SISSISON, | SAM. HOLDSWORTH, |
| CHARLES MOON,    | WM. WEBSTER,      | THOS. THOMPSON.  |

The Hull address was accompanied by the subjoined extract from "Further Thoughts on a Separation from the Church," printed in the Arminian Magazine, for April, 1791.

" 'I never had any design of separating from the church. I have no such design now. I do not believe the Methodists in general design it, when I am no more seen. I do and will do all that is in my power to prevent such an event. Nevertheless, in spite of all that I can do, many of them will separate from it (although I am apt to think not one half, perhaps not a third of them). These will be so bold and injudicious as to form a separate party, which consequently will dwindle away into a dry, dull, separate party. In opposition to these, I declare once more, that I live and die a member of the Church of England: and that none who regard my judgment or advice, will ever separate\* from it.

' JOHN WESLEY.'

" At a meeting of the stewards, leaders, trustees, and other of the Methodist society, at Hull, it was unanimously agreed, ' that printed copies of the above written letter and extract

\* Mr. Wesley's words, in reference to a separation from the Church, must be understood in a qualified sense; otherwise, he may be quoted as an authority against himself, which would involve a charge of inconsistency. His judgment on this subject seems to have included two things—first, that the Methodists should, if possible, maintain a visible union with the Church, by attending some, if not all, of her services: second, when this could not be, by reason of absolute impediments, their separation should not be from the Church, considered in her form and constitution, but by reason of something accidentally associated with her. The following passage, by Mr. Wesley, printed in the Arminian Magazine, in April, 1790. should be read in connection with the quotation given in the Hull address:—

" The grand argument (which in some particular cases must be acknowledged to have weight) was this:—'The minister of the parish wherein we dwell, neither lives nor preaches the gospel. He walks in the way to hell himself, and teaches his flock to do the same. Can you

should be sent to the stewards of every principal society in England.' It was also unanimously agreed, "that a copy should be given to Mr. Thomas Taylor, and another to Mr. John Shaw, the preachers of the Hull Circuit, from which they might express to the next Conference the sentiments of the society at Hull."

The foregoing letter from Hull having come to the knowledge of Mr. Kilham, who disapproved of the objects sought to be obtained by it, he immediately sat down and sketched an answer; and for the purpose of having the weight and merits of his reply impartially ascertained, he put it into the post-office at York, and sent it anonymously to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, that the friends there, who had already received the Hull circular, might do with it as they thought proper, without knowing from what quarter it had come. It was no sooner read, than the leading members, including the society and circuit stewards at Newcastle, adopted Mr. Kilham's reply, and, with some trifling alterations, and adding a Postscript of their own, they caused it to be printed and extensively circulated, as an antidote to the communication from Hull. A short extract or two will shew Mr. Kilham's opinion, and that of the Newcastle Society, on the points mooted by the Hull address:

"We readily acknowledge your good intention, in addressing us in the affectionate manner you have done. With you we bemoan the loss of so valuable a man from the head of our Connexion: we wish to follow him both in doctrine and discipline, as far as he followed Christ. Mr. Wesley was always greatly attached to the establishment, and, in the warmth of his zeal, wrote in defence of his people continuing to communicate in the church: but since God has called him from us, would it not be advisable for us to enter into

advise them (the Methodists) to attend his preaching?' I cannot advise them to it. 'What can they do on the Lord's day, suppose no other church be near? Do you advise them to go to a dissenting meeting? or to meet in our own preaching house?' Where this is really the case, I cannot blame them if they do. Although, therefore, I earnestly oppose the *general* separation of the Methodists from the Church, yet I cannot condemn such a *partial* separation. I believe to separate thus far from these miserable wretches, who are the scandal of our church and nation, would be for the honour of the church as well as to the glory of God.

"JOHN WESLEY."

an impartial examination of our principles and conduct, before we proceed any farther? If Mr. Wesley has left us rules exactly agreeing with "the law and the testimony," we should follow them with avidity; but should it be found, on near inspection, that in some things he has been mistaken, (and who is not liable to mistake?) ought we not, as soon as possible, to lay those mistakes aside? We are called on by an apostle, to "*prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good.*" It is for the honour of any person or body of people to renounce error and embrace truth."

In this passage, it is maintained, on true protestant principles, that the scriptures, and not any earthly being or tribunal, is the only authority in matters of religion; and that to the test of the word of God, every ordinance and institution should be brought, and if it will not stand this ordeal, it ought then to be laid aside, whoever may have been the occasion of its introduction. In regard to the sacrament, and the constraint put upon the Methodists to receive it at church, the reply observes, in continuation,—

"Many of our people, in various societies, never communicate any where, because their consciences will not suffer them to go among sinners to receive from the hand of an ungodly minister. Others go with many doubts and fears, and are condemned because they eat. Those who appear to go with the greatest satisfaction, depend more upon what the reformers and Mr. Wesley have said on the lawfulness of partaking, than upon that Word that shall judge them at the last day. Many go from us to the dissenters, because they can have the ordinance in a more sacred manner among them. Many of our preachers cannot insist much upon the necessity of this ordinance, because they cannot send their people with a good conscience to the church."

The reply then passes to the question of dissent, and the right of the Methodist preachers, with their qualifications, to administer the Lord's Supper, as well as to preach the gospel:

"We are dissenters in fact, though not in profession. Our preachers and chapels are licenced in the same manner. All our preaching and meetings are so many steps from conformity to the church; we are obliged to fly to the acts which screen dissenters in times of persecution. It may be said

of us, with great propriety, "we eat our own bread, we wear our own apparel,—only we are called churchmen to take away our reproach." Let us ask, do you not believe in your heart, your preachers are called of God to the work of the ministry? Have they not gifts for the work which render them acceptable to most that hear them? Are they not in general men of sound experience and good morality? Do they not give proof of their piety in their life and conversation? Are they not zealous in promoting the glory of God in your salvation, and in the conversion of all that hear them? Do they not labour night and day for this, preaching publicly, and from house to house? Are you not selected from the world, and, by your own choice, connected with them? Do they not instruct, exhort, encourage, support, comfort, build up, warn, reprove, rebuke, censure, suspend, &c., and in every sense watch over your souls as they that must give an account to God for you? Has God given them this power, and called them to no other labours of love for your furtherance in the divine life? Has God forbidden these men baptizing your children, and giving you the sacrament? Can you suppose that your preachers, who are men of piety and ability to minister the word, should be under the necessity of sending you among the ungodly for that ordinance which is the most sacred in Christianity? Would it not be greatly to our advantage to have the sacrament from those ministers who daily watch over our souls in our own chapels, and among our own friends? Would not this shew our order and steadfastness in the faith, and give the world to see we act consistent with truth? All who do not choose at first to comply, will, by degrees, conform to the conduct their reason approves, though their prejudice and custom may call it innovation. It is probable this would not lessen, but add thousands to our Connexion. How could this separation cause us to dwindle away into "dull, dry formality"? Does our union with the church cause our life and activity? The three grand causes of our differing from other dissenters would continue; *i. e.* 1. Our preachers would insist on the same *doctrines*. 2. They would exercise the same *discipline*, with improvements. And, 3. The *Itinerant plan* would be continued. These, we apprehend, and not our union with the church, are, under God, the cause of our differing from others. It is a little astonishing, that you in Hull, who are sensible, pious men, should so positively affirm our future deadness.

should we be allowed these privileges ! —By what spirit is your prediction given ? It does not, on trial, comport with either reason or revelation. Is it not a little singular, that you, who are so highly favoured with lively ministers in the church,\* should strive to influence the whole Connexion to follow your steps ? Ought you not to have told the people that your ministers are pious, and their lives spiritual ? If all the large towns throughout the kingdom were favoured as you are, there would be some reason for our communicating in the church. Let us, brethren, stand open to conviction. Let us readily give up our own will, and not oppose the leadings of Providence.”

The Hull letter and the Newcastle reply, became the parents of many meetings, and printed communications, on both sides of the subject ; and the period between Mr. Wesley’s death and the following Conference, was one of great activity amongst the Methodists. The preachers assembled by themselves ; and the friends and leading members were convened together almost everywhere, to ascertain each other’s opinions as to what ought to be done ; and the proceedings, in numerous cases, were published and circulated, for the purpose of advising and influencing others.

The question of the expediency of the Methodists separating from the Established Church, was one which had occupied Mr. Kilham’s thoughts for several years —probably, indeed, from the time of his having been obliged to become licensed as a Dissenter, in order that he might preach the gospel ; and his opinion was in favour of such separation being effected. His views on the subject were embodied in a pamphlet, which he wrote immediately after Mr. Wesley’s death, but whether it was published or not, has not been ascertained. The MS. copy, found among his papers, is complete, with a preface ; and it is not improbable that it was printed at the time, without his name. In this work, Mr. Kilham, for the purpose of determining the point whether the Methodists might leave the Establishment, considered, first, what constituted a Christian

\* The clergy belonging to the Establishment in Hull were at that time singularly pious and evangelical men, as Milner, Dikes, &c.

church ; and in this enquiry, finding that the Methodist societies had all the marks specified in the New Testament as essential requisites, his inference naturally was, that they were authorised to stand alone, and entitled to have all the ordinances of the gospel instituted among themselves. One section of the pamphlet is headed,—“How far is it justifiable to be connected with the Church, and how far reprehensible?” Under this division, Mr. Kilham states that he would not have it understood he held it to be wrong for Methodists to worship and communicate at church, or even to become churchwardens, when circumstances required it: in this sense, therefore, he wanted no absolute separation; but he maintained, at the same time, that the law having marked their preachers, their chapels, and their religious exercises, with dissent, it was inconsistent, in the face of all this, for the Methodists to profess to be churchmen, or to restrict themselves from the enjoyment of any religious privilege in their own body on that account. These are the principles which Mr. Kilham laid down, avowedly with a desire that they might be considered and tried by the Scriptures. His object in writing the pamphlet appears to have been, to call attention to the subject, on the part of both preachers and members of society, at a moment when all were anxious respecting the future state of Methodism, and preparatory to the meeting of Conference, at which some decision would be come to on the subject. The subjoined form of prayer, which Mr. Kilham gives at the end of the pamphlet, as proper for the Methodists under existing circumstances, shews he felt only desirous that the best and most scriptural plan, whatever that might be, should be adopted ; and that he had no self-will, which he wished to oppose to what might be judged to be the will of God concerning his people.

“O great and ever-blessed Lord God Almighty ! we prostrate ourselves at Thy feet, and humbly adore Thy most holy name. We thank Thee for sparing thy servant [Mr. Wesley] so many years, and for calling him at last so triumphantly to Thyself. We submit to Thy will in this with thankfulness, and own the abundance of Thy mercy and

love. O our God ! do Thou become our Leader and Guide in all our future life. Raise up, by Thy divine power, men possessed of wisdom and grace to manage the cause we have espoused. Do Thou, O God ! superintend our affairs, and order every thing according as Thy infinite wisdom shall direct. Let no divisions take place that will in any way injure our Connexion. Let the world know that Thou art our God. Let them see the cause is Thine, and that Thou canst uphold it. If it be for Thy glory that we should separate from the Established Church in these lands, dispose the hearts of the people to submit cheerfully to it ; if it be most for Thy glory to continue as we are, reconcile all our minds to it. We are conscious, O Lord ! if Thou wilt direct and influence, we shall be guided aright. Pour out Thy Spirit, we beseech Thee, O God ! upon all our societies and congregations ; let them know Thou art still with us. Give us to see of the travail of our Redeemer's soul, and let both us that preach, and those who hear, be truly satisfied. We leave all in Thy hands—let Thy will be done, O Lord ! by us, as it is by the angels that surround Thy throne. Grant us these, with every other mercy, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

The subjects more particularly relating to the church and sacraments, were not the only matters that obtained the consideration of the Methodists at that time. The following resolutions, adopted at a provincial, or county meeting, held at Redruth, a few weeks before Conference, shew that the necessity of important alterations in regard to government and the administration of discipline had begun to be felt by the societies ; and, moreover, that it was then believed they possessed authority to determine by what rules they would be regulated :—

“ At a Meeting of the Delegates, and others, from the Methodist Societies in the County of Cornwall, held at Redruth, June 14th, 1791, it was agreed that an amendment of our discipline is necessary.\*

\* It is necessary to be borne in mind, that at the time these resolutions were passed, the preachers alone, and without consulting the societies, had power to form classes—admit or exclude members—appoint stewards—divide circuits—recommend preachers to travel—and were the sole arbiters and judges of each other's character and conduct. This state of things continued until 1795, when Articles of Pacification

*We therefore resolve,*

1. That in the forming of classes, the members constituting every class (or a majority of them) shall choose their Leader.

2. That the people in every society (or a majority of them) shall choose the Society Stewards.

3. That no preacher shall admit into, or expel from, the society, any member, without the consent of a majority of such society.

4. That the Stewards assembled at quarter meeting, shall choose the Circuit Stewards.

5. That there shall be no division of circuits, without consent of a majority of the Stewards at the quarterly meeting.

6. That no person be recommended to Conference (or sent out) as a travelling preacher, without a certificate from the Stewards assembled at the quarterly meeting.

7. That if any preacher be charged with not walking worthy of his vocation, or with being deficient in abilities, the Circuit Stewards (on complaint to them made) shall convene the Stewards of the several societies in their circuit; who, from among themselves, shall choose an equal number with the preachers present, to judge of the charge or charges that shall be produced; and according to the decision of the majority, such preacher shall be continued in, or expelled the circuit.

8. That WE will on all occasions support the itinerant plan, and cheerfully contribute our proportion of the expense.

*We propose,*

That every preacher coming from a distant circuit shall bring a certificate of his good-conduct (while in that circuit) from a majority of the Stewards assembled at the quarterly meeting.

That for the advantage of the Connexion in general, the preachers (who are not included in the Conference Deed), be admitted to an equal share of the government, and have a vote in all cases, the affairs of preaching-houses only excepted.

We highly disapprove of the proposal for dividing the kingdom into districts, conceiving it would be injurious to Methodism.

were granted by the Conference, in which certain concessions were made to the people on the above points.—For a further account of these Articles, the reader is referred to the proceedings of Conference, 1795.



*Resolved,*

That a copy of these resolutions, proposals, &c., be transmitted to every travelling preacher in the kingdom. Wishing you peace, amity, and harmony at the ensuing Conference, our prayer is, that prosperity may attend the cause in which you are embarked. We subscribe ourselves your affectionate brethren,

RICHARD CORNISH, &c.\*

[50 other names are also appended.]

Similar meetings were held, and resolutions nearly corresponding with the above were adopted, in other parts of the kingdom; clearly showing that the societies understood themselves to have been left, at the death of Mr. Wesley, with considerable means of self-government, and not that the whole legislative power was vested in the Conference.\*

\* In judging of Mr. Wesley's intentions respecting the Conference, it has been a common error to be guided in our opinion by the conduct of the Conference itself since his death, instead of being governed by what he did in its constitution; and because it has in fact exercised absolute controul, and been changing its laws and extending and ramifying its empire from year to year, the general conclusion has been—as if a bold claim to an estate were identical with a good title—that such were the plan and purpose of Mr. Wesley. All evidence is, however, on the contrary side. Mr. Wesley never anticipated such an onward course of legislation as that which has been taken: he looked upon the Methodist code as completed by himself; and all that he supposed he had left to be done was, for the system to be uniformly kept in operation—the preachers meeting in Conference to receive, station, and expel preachers—the trustees erecting chapels, and seeing that the Methodist doctrines were promulgated by competent and worthy ministers so appointed—and, finally, the society and circuit meetings, consisting of stewards, leaders, trustees, and local and circuit preachers, admitting or excluding members, and transacting their particular or provincial church business. Such was the design of Mr. Wesley; and this view of the case is further confirmed by the circumstance of his having belonged to the Church of England, which had a definite and fixed constitution, subject to little or no legislative change, and which could not be altered but by the consent of Parliament. He expected Methodism would continue the same as he left it, exercising a direct and simple agency upon the souls of men, purely with an aim to their conversion, and to the propagation of the gospel of Jesus Christ in the world.

But it will be said,—however persuaded Mr Wesley might have been, that adequate regulations had been made by himself for the efficient and permanent government of the Methodist body, it soon became evident, from a change of circumstances, and the progress of events, that modifications and additional laws were necessary, and unless these had been attended to, the system would not have continued. All this is at once granted,—and we ground thereon the right of the people to have been consulted

One of the Cornwall resolutions, it will be observed, expresses disapprobation of the Connexion being divided into districts, on the ground that it would be injurious to Methodism. This refers to what had been recommended, at a meeting which was held at Halifax, by a number of the preachers, who had issued a circular letter in favour of such a change being made.

Mr. Kilham mentions in his diary the conversations which he had with some of the preachers with whom he was more particularly intimate, on the state of affairs; and he remarks, that while there seemed to be a general agreement among them all, that some alterations ought to be made at the Conference, much jealousy was felt lest a few, who had evidently looked forward to Mr. Wesley's death for acquiring great authority and influence, should be tempted to regard their own exaltation and power as paramount to all other considerations.

The individuals on whom suspicion more particularly rested, of having a design to seize the reins of government after Mr. Wesley, were Dr. Coke and Mr. Mather, especially the latter, who had exercised great influence over him, and almost virtually ruled the Connexion in his name for some time previous to his death. Mr. Wesley was strongly attached to Dr. Coke, and had reposed great confidence in him, on account of his being a clergyman of the Established Church, and having entered heartily into the Methodist plan. Mr. Mather was one of his own assistants, of considerable ability as a preacher, with great pretensions to sanctity, and very plausible in his manners, especially towards Mr. Wesley, to whom he was quite a courtier. Added to these qualities, Mr. Mather was not wanting in ambition, and being a man of much

as to those circumstances and changes, and to have had a voice in any new regulations which became necessary. We think that, antecedent to this, the members of society had a scriptural claim to exercise their suffrages in the government of the church: but, waiving this, it is obvious that as soon as alterations became requisite after Mr. Wesley's death, no one department of the community—neither preachers, trustees, nor members, separately considered—were competent to determine upon new measures, but the combined authority and concurrence of all were indispensable.

shrewdness and policy, in seeking an object he was disposed to compass it artfully, by degrees, rather than to make an open and a direct effort at its attainment. He was therefore every way fitted for engaging in such an enterprise, provided he were so inclined, and saw the least chance of being successful. Another circumstance which pointed out Dr. Coke and Mr Mather as likely to become joint candidates or competitors for supremacy, was, their having obtained ordination from Mr. Wesley as Methodist bishops; and it was anticipated they might possibly press this consecration in favour of their claims to be acknowledged the head, or heads of the Connexion, after the demise of its founder. It happened, however, that Dr. Coke was abroad on missionary business, when Mr. Wesley died. A friend in London informed him of that event by letter, but as he reached England only on the eve of Conference, he was prevented from becoming a promoter of any scheme which might have been formed had he been in the kingdom a few months earlier,\* and before any expression of feeling had taken place on the part of the generality of the preachers and people at their respective meetings, against having a succession of rulers over the body with similar powers to those enjoyed by their late venerable father.

\* The probability of Dr. Coke having had an expectation of either governing the body alone or conjointly with Mr. Mather, is perhaps further strengthened by his conduct immediately on his return to England. On reaching the Channel, he hired a fishing-boat, and was landed by that means in Cornwall. In visiting the first travelling preachers he could meet with, he was shown a circular letter containing the proceedings of the meeting of preachers that had been held at Halifax, which were in opposition to the Connexion being governed by the appointment of a successor to Mr. Wesley. On reading this, it was said the Doctor, throwing himself back in his chair, exclaimed,—“ This is not to be borne,” and seemed much agitated. He immediately posted from Cornwall to Wakefield, where he expected to find Mr. Mather; and not meeting with him there, he hastened to several other places, until he found him. They were then closeted together for several hours, and it is probable, after learning from Mr. Mather what was the general feeling of the preachers and others respecting a governing head, they both regarded the acquirement of that distinction as hopeless at that time. A scheme for ruling by bishops was afterwards projected, which Mr. Kilham was the great means of frustrating, for which he was never forgiven by Mr. Mather.

The fears entertained of the designs of Mr. Mather and Dr. Coke were much allayed by the confidence which was placed in Mr. Bradburn, Mr. T. Taylor, and several other leading preachers, who had often opposed Mr. Wesley in Conference, and shewn themselves the friends of liberty, so far as regarded the sacrament and having worship in church hours; and who, it was believed, would not suffer the societies or their brethren in the ministry, to be held in subjection by one or a few individuals who might aspire to rule over them.

Mr. Kilham addressed a letter on the subject to Mr. Bradburn in April, in which, after reminding him of the efforts which he had already made, though generally without success, to effect the removal of many grievances under which the Connexion laboured, he urged him to another trial at the ensuing Conference, and suggested several matters affecting the societies and preachers, which he submitted to be worthy of consideration.

While each section was devising its own plan for the future management of the Connexion, and proposing to memorialize Conference accordingly, the time for holding that annual assembly approached, and the preachers began to repair to Manchester, where it was appointed to meet. Mr. Kilham says,—“On the 18th of July, brother H. and I, being recommended to God by the prayers of the brethren, took leave of our families, and set off on our journey to the Conference at Manchester. We preached to many of the societies on our way, and found ourselves much refreshed in visiting and communing with the friends.”

On the meeting of Conference, an immediate trial of strength took place in the appointment of a Chairman or President, which office had invariably been held by Mr. Wesley. Lest, however, the individual elected at the first Conference after his death, should suppose himself thereby invested with any of his predecessor's authority, Mr. Mather, Dr. Coke, Mr. Benson, and others, were passed by, and choice was made of Mr. Thompson, who had preferred no claims to supremacy, and respecting whose designs no jealousy

had existed. And to be yet more secure against the assumption of governing authority by any one person, it was formally resolved that the power of the President should cease on the rising of Conference, when he would become in every respect like his brethren. These manifestations plainly indicated the temper of the preachers, and were intended to shew that no individual or small number of preachers need entertain the hope of being constituted the head of the body, in the place of Mr. Wesley. Having made this demonstration, the business of Conference was proceeded with. The party favourable to separation from the Church, was perhaps stronger than that which inclined to the establishment; and it is not improbable, but for the two following circumstances, something would have been decided upon in reference to that subject. A few days before the Conference assembled, a riot broke out in Birmingham, professedly in favour of the Church and King, and the parties engaged in it proceeded to great lengths of violence against several Dissenters, particularly Dr. Priestley, whose house and library were destroyed. This had the effect of deterring the Methodists in many places from taking any step which might be considered inimical to the church at that moment; and the occurrence was taken hold of by a party in Conference, to prevent any declaration from being made of a departure from the Establishment, lest a popular cry, and perhaps a riot, should be raised against them. Another event had recently happened at Manchester, which strengthened these fears. A conviction had taken place at the quarter sessions, on a charge of assault on two persons who had been pushed out of the Methodist chapel, because they had attempted to be present at a private meeting, after having been put out of the society for reproving a preacher at a love-feast for powdering his wig, and several of the rich people for lining their pews with cloth. At this trial, the law respecting dissenting chapels, which requires the doors to be open to the public, had been explained, with an intimation from the bench, that the chapels, when in use, must in future be accessible

to all who might choose to attend, and that no person should be prevented from entering. This heightened the apprehensions of Conference, who almost expected the public would force their way upon them during their sittings; and the preachers were easily persuaded not to decide upon any thing which might be regarded as opposing the church, lest the populace should be irritated, and let loose its fury upon them. The Conference, it must be allowed, had great difficulties on all sides, and, every circumstance considered, it was perhaps more perplexing than can now be conceived how to determine for the best, amidst the conflicting opinions which existed both within and without that assembly. At length, however, a decision was come to, very general in its character and exceedingly specious in the terms in which it was expressed. It honoured the memory of Mr. Wesley, which was dear to them all; seemed not to disappoint the hopes of those who advocated the concession of certain privileges to the societies; and tended to satisfy those who were opposed to any change in the system. The resolution was,—to take up and pursue the plan their aged father had left them, exactly in the manner he had done. The ambiguity of this phraseology was a great recommendation with the generality of the preachers; and each party designed to expound it in the way that agreed with the line of conduct which was intended to be pursued. While some regarded Mr. Wesley's "plan" to be that of continuing to do only what had been done before, and professing attachment to the Church of England, to the exclusion of the sacrament, &c. from the Methodist chapels; according to others, Mr. Wesley's "plan" was progressive, its chief excellence being to follow the leadings of Providence, (which was really the case with him) without restriction in any way from doing good; and under this comprehensive interpretation, these proposed to administer the sacrament to such societies as requested it, as well as to have preaching in church hours when it was deemed expedient. Nor was this latitudinarianism concealed during Conference; for in the discussions which had

taken place previous to determining to follow "Mr. Wesley's plan," the sense in which they understood that phrase, was explained, by several of the preachers, to be such as admitted them to exercise their discretion in respect to the sacrament and other things; and they moreover added, that they might feel it a duty to give that ordinance to some of the societies, where they should be appointed to labour the following year. Not to prolong the disputation, this avowal was simply met by a general observation on the part of the President, that whatever any preacher did in his circuit, he must be accountable for to the next Conference. Here the matter was allowed to rest: for a number were willing to take upon themselves this responsibility, not doubting, that in case of imparting the elements of the Lord's Supper to those Methodists who desired to receive it at the hands of their own ministers, they should be able, if accused of it as a crime, to justify their conduct to any future Conference. Under this impression, and with this conventional understanding, the decision to follow "Mr. Wesley's plan" was unanimously adopted.

It was also resolved to divide the kingdom into districts,\* according to the recommendation of the preachers, at the meeting which was held at Halifax previous to Conference.

Numerous letters and petitions had been transmitted to Conference by the societies in every part of the

\* When it is recollected, that in a short time after the Connexion had been thus divided, a proposition was made by a few of the leading preachers for the appointment of Bishops amongst the Methodists, it seems more than probable that the two measures co-existed from the first in the minds of those who suggested them; but for the sake of a better chance of their being effected, if one were made to precede the other, the latter was kept back for a season. No sooner, however, were the districts (intended to be dioceses) formed, than the more episcopal part of the plan was brought forward, but without success, though it was presented in two or three different shapes, and supported by all the power and influence of the parties who, if it had been carried, expected to be raised to the bench. The formation of districts was, however, in itself, a great improvement; inasmuch as the Connexion, which, on account of its extent, had become unwieldy, was thereby rendered more manageable. If a lay representation, possessing equal power with the preachers, had been introduced into district meetings, it would have gone a great way towards removing the most objectionable feature of the system.

kingdom, for the purpose of making it acquainted with their sentiments and wishes in reference to the body. It was of course expected that these documents would be read, and their contents allowed to have due weight in the deliberations of that assembly; but, extraordinary as it may appear, nearly all, if not every one, of these memorials were burnt without having been opened—and this by way of shortening the business of Conference, and—as it was afterwards alleged in excuse for such conduct—to enable the preachers the sooner to return to the work of the Lord in their circuits! For some time, this slight upon the societies was kept secret; but when it transpired, the circumstance gave rise to much dissatisfaction, and was afterwards used with reason as an argument in favour of having a more substantial representation at the Conference, than the passive and frail messengers which had been thus unceremoniously dealt with.

Mr. Kilham was removed from Whitby to the Newcastle-upon-Tyne circuit, to labour with Mr. Gualter and Mr. Cownley. Of the latter, from what he had seen of his liberal conduct and christian spirit during the Conference, he had the highest opinion; and he expressed in his diary at the time, the satisfaction he felt at having such a venerable and pious colleague.

Mr. Kilham's journey to Newcastle, and the routine of his labours in that circuit, were described in a letter to his father, written as soon as he had become settled after his removal from Whitby:—

*Newcastle, 6th October, 1791.*

HONOURED AND DEAR FATHER,

After waiting with concern for several weeks, we at last received your letter, and are thankful to hear of your continued welfare. When I returned from Conference to Whitby, we made what haste we could to sail with the first vessel to the north. We went on board on Saturday morning, at one o'clock, and after tossing three hours in the harbour, we were obliged to go on shore again, the wind being contrary, This was exceedingly agreeable to me and the friends. On the Sunday, I delivered my last message to that affectionate people, from 1 Cor. 16-22. There was much sorrow among



the friends at our leaving them so soon, as they had no apprehension of our removal till they heard from Conference. I did not make any interest to continue, but left myself in the hands of God, hoping he would direct for his own glory and our good. On Monday morning we went on board again, and soon got out of the harbour, several of the friends accompanying us into the roads : we then parted with them in love and peace. In the evening, we contracted with some coblemen, and were taken seven miles by them into the north side of Sunderland harbour, and were kindly received by Mr. Cairns, one of our friends. On the Wednesday evening we came by coach to this place, and met with a very affectionate reception. It was several days before Mr. Gaulter and his little family came. He is about my age. We were both admitted on trial and into connexion together. He is a very pious, good man, and a very good preacher. His wife is equally kind and obliging, and we shall be happy and comfortable together. There has been a division of opinion in this society several years, and matters ran high at the conclusion of last year. It was feared a party would fall off, but we have used all our influence to make peace, and by God's blessing upon our endeavours we have succeeded much in the business. There are a few leading men of the high church party, who appear of the same spirit that Bonner and Gardner were of. But the party which is by far the strongest are possessed of the spirit of true religion. They are willing to submit to Conference, and gladly sacrifice for the present the hope of having the sacrament among ourselves, for the sake of peace. Reason and Scripture have little weight while persons continue blinded by prejudice ; but it is exceedingly pleasing to see the contending parties come near one another in brotherly love, and we are resolved to do what we can for peace. Six weeks last Sunday, I entered regularly into my place in the circuit. I began by reading prayers and preaching at Howden Pans. In the afternoon and night we preach at South Shields, where we have a good society and congregation. We spend Monday in the town. Tuesday, at 2 o'clock, we preach at Philadelphia, and at night at Benton Square. We preach at Gateshead Fell on Wednesday afternoon, and one Sunday in the fortnight, at 2 o'clock, and at St. Anthony's on Thursday evening. We preach at North Shields, in Mr. Adamson's chapel, on Friday evening, and on Sunday, noon and night. The two houses which were built here a few

years ago are taken from us. Mr. Atley preaches in one and the other is seized by the Earl of Carlisle, which we are in hope of getting again after a season. We preach in the mornings at 5. On Saturday we preach at Hartley. We come here on Monday, and stay in the town for a fortnight, preaching on Monday, Friday, and Sunday evenings, and once a fortnight on Sunday mornings. Mr. Cownley, a very venerable, pious old man, and an excellent preacher, preaches on Tuesday and Thursday evenings; and on the Sunday morning, we read prayers and preach at Byker. I have engaged to lecture four mornings in the week at five o'clock; and also, to visit one of the workhouses once a week, where there are 160 persons, who are obliged to attend. We have several bands to attend, and other things to do, which will take up all the time we can comfortably spare, and we need not be an hour unemployed. We go out from hence [on the Monday to Horsley; Tuesday to Ovington; Wednesday, Nafferton; Thursday, Stamfordham; Friday, Eachwick; Saturday, Willington; and on Sunday to Howden Pans. In each of these places we have tolerable congregations, and in most of them small societies. We meet with great kindness and affection from the people. There is a good prospect in many places; and we hope, as Providence has led our way here, he will make his goings to be glorious before the people. I cannot write all that might give you pleasure. My wife and children are well, and join in love to brother, sisters, to your preachers, and to all friends.

We are, your affectionate children,

A. and S. KILHAM.

On the 15th of November, Mr. Kilham addressed another letter to his father, informing him that on the preceding day they had committed to the grave the remains of their little boy, who had died of inflammation in the chest. He states, that though they loved him as much as it was possible to do, yet by the grace of God, which had sanctified the bereavement to Mrs. Kilham and himself, they were enabled to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away, and blessed be the name of the Lord." A few days after the interment, he took occasion to improve the event by preaching a sermon from 2nd. Sam., chap. xii, v. 21, 22, and 23,

in which he discoursed, first, on the conduct to be adopted when friends and relatives are under affliction; and, secondly, the behaviour which is proper when they are taken away by death. The sermon, which he left written at full length, contains many appropriate remarks, shewing his own mind to have been in a state of humble resignation to the Providence of God, which had bereaved him of his child; and that his earnest desire was, that both himself and others should regard such dispensations as designed to moderate their attachment to earthly objects, while their hopes and affections were more fully raised to things which pertained to the eternal world.

A large majority of the society at Newcastle having requested the sacrament, Mr. Cownley, who had been ordained by Mr. Wesley, consented to administer it at Byker chapel, two miles off, which had been erected by Mr. Johnson, a gentleman residing there, at his own expense. This place was chosen for the purpose, on account of the proprietor of the chapel being willing, and because the trustees and a few other individuals at Newcastle were opposed to that ordinance being received, except at the established church: it was, however, hoped this plan of accommodation would not displease any party, as those who desired the sacrament could have it by going a short distance, and others, who disapproved of its being given by the Methodist preachers, could not justly complain, since it was not forced upon themselves, nor yet imparted in the chapel at Newcastle. These expectations were, however, disappointed. Three of the class-leaders in Newcastle, and about twenty members, left the society; and one of them (Mr. Robert Grey) addressed a letter to Mr. Cownley on the subject, charging that venerable man, who had been a preacher for nearly half a century, with dishonesty, and with having violated his engagements to Mr. Wesley; and all this merely for having administered the ordinance of the Lord's Supper to those who sat under him as their minister, and whom he had instructed in the doctrines and duties of the Gospel. It is a thing hardly now to be credited, that

the discharging of such a duty should at any former period have been imputed to the Methodist preachers as a crime by their own class-leaders; yet the fact is unquestionable; and it may moreover be affirmed, that as the pretext was groundless, the manner in which they were attacked on the subject was often in a high degree uncourteous. The following is a specimen of Mr. Grey's style when writing to Mr. Cownley:—

“Oh, what a scene appears,—an old man, standing on the borders of eternity, playing this double game, shuffling and prevaricating in the most solemn concerns. I ask where is conscience now? where is the honest man? You have, in compliance with the will of some of your friends, paid no regard to your most solemn promises. Let those friends come forth and answer, if not to God, at least to man;—you never before had so much need of them. The charge is brought home. Let conscience speak, do you sustain the character of an honest man, or falsify your most solemn engagement. Indeed, sir, you have given me more advantage against you than I will take. I will not push it—I spare you.”

Let the above be contrasted with Mr. Cownley's reply:

“My dear friend, you are not required to deviate in the least from the way you judge to be the best; no one pretends to lord it over your conscience; and will you not give to others, what you justly claim for yourself? Surely we may and ought, in things not absolutely necessary to salvation, to think and let think, and agree to disagree.”

Mr. Cownley having answered the first letter from Mr. Grey, received a second, just as he returned from a journey much fatigued, and was preparing to go into the country part of the circuit: and having neither time nor inclination to reply to it himself, he put the communication unopened into Mr. Kilham's hands, and begged him to write Mr. Grey in return. Mr. Kilham did as Mr. Cownley requested, and the consequence was,—several additional letters passed between them, until Mr. Kilham, having pinched his antagonist rather keenly, their correspondence ceased. This was in January, 1792. In about three weeks afterwards, Mr.

Kilham was surprised to find that Mr. Grey had published the letters in a pamphlet, with several deviations from the copies, and had added a prefatory note, an appendix, and some short remarks of his own. Not liking the controversy to remain in this state, Mr. Kilham immediately commenced a pamphlet, entitled "An Address to the Members and Friends of the Newcastle Society," in which, besides giving an account of the correspondence between Mr. Grey, Mr. Cownley, and himself, he briefly discussed the question of the Methodists having the sacrament in their own chapels, and administered by their own preachers. This was printed, and circulated as extensively as Mr. Grey's pamphlet had been; and as it was one of the first pieces which had been issued respecting the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, it gained great attention, and was highly commended by the more liberal part of the Connexion, preachers as well as private members. Mr. Kilham received testimonials of approval from several of his brethren. One letter may be given, coming as it did from one of the oldest and most respectable preachers in the Connexion, and as it conveyed the sentiments of several others which were in unison with his own, in regard to Mr. Kilham's performance.

*Halifax, April 7, 1792.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I am much obliged to you for your kind and affectionate letter, and for the books which you sent me. They came when I was just setting out for Manchester, to meet with the Committee of that district, so that I took some of them along with me. The brethren approved of them very much, and I will take care to send them to all the neighbouring circuits in a few days, please God all is well with me.

It seems the high church party are of the same spirit every where. Every one must be subject to their will, and act as they do, or there is no peace to be expected. This same Mr. Grey seems wonderfully ready to quote Mr. Wesley when on his own side of the question: but on the other side, Mr. Wesley's authority weighs with him not so much as a single grain of sand. He may think what he will, but it seems to me very melancholy indeed to see an old man,

after about forty years' standing in the Church of God, so entirely under the power of his own spirit and temper, and such an utter stranger to meekness, gentleness, and the whole mind of Christ. I do not know him, but be he who he will, or what he will, his own letters bear full testimony against him as a Christian, and show him to be very ignorant, yet extremely positive. A furious, hot-headed bigot to what he calls the Church, and utterly devoid of all charity for those who differ from him, although they have the whole Bible on their side. Wretched bigotry! O that it was forever banished from the face of the earth! I doubt not but Mr. Cownley will have wisdom and grace enough to enable him to bear such unkind and unchristian treatment. He has been labouring to do this man and his fellows good for many years, but he has not succeeded according to his wishes; far from it. Yet his reward is from the Lord nevertheless.

I hope the time is now drawing near when our people will be brought out of Egypt, and to the full enjoyment of all the privileges and blessings of the Gospel. The Lord hasten the happy day!

You will find it highly necessary to act in this business with great prudence, gentleness, humility, and love. This is your comfort: you are engaged in the cause of God, and he will stand by you, and I trust make you more than conqueror.

All who met at Manchester seemed on your side—more especially Messrs. Thomas and Henry Taylor, Mr. Bradburn, Mr. Clark, and Mr. Snowden; so that I hope at the next Conference the matter will be established.

We have had the sacrament many times in some places in this circuit, and the Lord has owned and blessed them very much indeed! Brother Entwistle joins me in kindest love to yourself, Mr. Cownley, Mr. Gaulter, and all friends. May the God of peace and love be powerfully present with you. I am,

Your affectionate brother,

J. PAWSON.

In another letter, which Mr. Kilham received from Mr. T. Taylor, he says, in reference to the same publication, "I have seen your pamphlet, and like it well—send me a hundred. It bears my thoughts, and almost some of my expressions."

It will astonish the reader when he is informed that for writing this very pamphlet, to which the preceding letter refers, and which was so greatly approved of by the preachers whose names are mentioned by Mr. Pawson, Mr. Kilham was called to account and censured at the next Conference, as will presently be more fully detailed, when the passages objected to, and the proceedings instituted thereon, will be given. Though Mr. Kilham had Messrs. Pawson, Taylor, Bradburn, Clark, and Cownley in his favour, yet he soon found several leading preachers ranging themselves on the contrary side; among whom were Dr. Coke, and Messrs. Mather, Thompson, and Benson. The last of these wrote a letter to Mr. Grey, and those who had withdrawn from the society at Newcastle on account of the sacrament being administered at Byker chapel, in which he condemned the introduction of this ordinance, and otherwise reflected upon Mr. Cownley\* and Mr. Kilham. As Mr. Benson appeared either to be unacquainted with the real facts of the case, or to have had his mind strangely prejudiced, Mr. Kilham wrote him respecting it, stating what had been the conduct of the different parties, as briefly as possible. The following portion of the letter more immediately relates to the subject:—

“When Mr. Cownley came here, many of our friends requested the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper at his hand, and he did not look on himself as bound by conscience to refuse the request. So he gave the sacrament at Byker on the 8th of January, and has done it three or four times since, to the comfort and satisfaction of many communicants. Mr.

\* A private memorandum, made by Mr. Kilham at the time of giving the sacrament to the Methodists at Newcastle, states that the party opposed to its being so administered, manifested as much abhorrence of those who partook of the Lord’s Supper at the hands of their own preachers, as if they had perpetrated the greatest crime: and they seemed also to expect some signal judgment from God to fall upon the individuals who had been the means of introducing it to the societies. The Methodists of the present day, when approaching the Lord’s table as to an ordinance long established amongst them, little consider the odium and persecution—proceeding, too, from Methodists—which fell to the lot of those who were the means of securing to them this privilege, now so unquestionably theirs.

Atmore gave it at Alnwick and Placey about the same time. God blessed and comforted the people exceedingly, and many who were prejudiced against these measures, surmounted their prejudices a few weeks ago, and went themselves. They dare not open their lips to speak against it in future, but determine to go when they have opportunity. It was never proposed to have the sacrament in the Orphan House; yet no sooner had Mr. Cownley given it at Byker, than Mr. Grey, &c., gave up their tickets, and withdrew from the society. They were told the sacraments should never be publicly given here without the consent of Conference, but nothing would satisfy them unless Mr. Cownley was prevented from proceeding at Byker, and other extravagant terms complied with. Mr. R—, who has also left, gave the following, as terms of reconciliation,—1. That all the pews in the gallery of the Newcastle chapel should be taken away, and benches brought in again, the people having liberty to sit as they pleased, without paying any thing. 2. That the nine o'clock preaching on the Sunday morning should be removed. 3. That the Sunday schools should not be taught in Church hours. 4. That the hour of meeting should be brought back to five on the Sunday evenings; and the love-feasts at night instead of the afternoon. 5. That no sacraments should be administered in any place in the circuit, nor children baptised; and the prayers should be removed from Byker and Howden Pans on the Sunday morning.

“The chapel holds about the same number of people as it did before the alteration; and the gallery lets for 50l. in the year. Three or four hundred people are frequently present on a Sunday morning, and have sufficient time to attend any other place of worship after the chapel looses. Near 300 children are taught every Sunday. Six o'clock suits the people much better than five on the Sunday evenings; and two in the afternoon is a much better hour for a love-feast here, than seven at night. The prayers and sacraments have been attended with much of the presence and blessing of God.

“If you will suffer your judgment to determine, you cannot think we have given them just cause to leave the society, and all the means established here, unless it be five o'clock preaching in the morning. They have used every means they could devise to hinder our labours from being blessed to the



outward hearers ; but God has given us many seals to our ministry in the midst of their opposition.

“When Mr. Grey took upon him to abuse Mr. Cownley, I could not suffer that man of God to be represented as the vilest of the vile, without standing forth to clear his injured character. Publishing the correspondence was their own act. I wrote and published the address afterward, to give a more clear account of the reasonableness of our conduct. They have not attempted to confute our arguments in defence of the steps we have taken.”

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“We by no means wish to force the sacraments on our people. We only desire, when they cannot receive to their satisfaction in the Church, they may have liberty to receive it among themselves. If you can, by scripture and reason, establish the old plan, do it ; but if you cannot, let your brethren have liberty of conscience. Why should you and a few respectable preachers wish to bind the consciences of your brethren ? The people in most of the circuits exceedingly respect their preachers ; and if liberty be granted at Conference for any of the Methodists to have the sacraments from their own preachers, they will submit, and agree to love one another. Their bible, their reason, and common sense inform them that the privilege they request is according to the revealed will of God ; and if any men lord it over them, commanding their attendance at church, they will look on such commands as contrary to God, and will obey him rather than any man. My kind respects to Mrs. Benson and Mr Clark.

Your's, &c.,

A. KILHAM.

The preachers stationed in the Newcastle district, were generally in favour of having the sacrament given to the societies, when it was desired ; and at the district meeting, held on the 8th of May, they unanimously expressed themselves to that effect ; and to ratify what they believed to be the truth the more solemnly, the preachers concluded their meeting by partaking of the Lord's Supper amongst themselves.

The annexed letter, from Mr. Taylor to Mr. Kilham, transmitted with a pamphlet which he had just published in defence of liberty among the Methodists, will show that he was co-operating in the same work,

and that he expected, as a reward for so acting, the reverse of courteous treatment from those who stood on the other side.

*Liverpool, 23rd June, 1792.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I am glad at what passed at your district meeting. I could have been glad if you should go to Conference. Mr Mather is raising all the forces he can to overturn common sense, scripture, and experience. Thompson has veered about again; so that I suppose there will be a warm contest at the Conference.

In my pamphlet, I am constrained to own that Mr. Wesley was fallible. I doubt that will be high treason, and that I shall be thought a disaffected person to Mr. Wesley. I knew him well for more than thirty years. I was in the cabinet for some time. I esteemed him highly. I knew him to be a great man; but I knew he was fallible: as such, the impertinent appeals to what he has said, have obliged me to appeal to what he did; and if there be any contradiction, the crime of divulging must lay upon such as rest their cause upon what Mr. Wesley hath said, rather than what the bible hath said. In matters of such importance as we plead for, nothing will satisfy me short of "Thus saith the Lord." An apostle was once withstood to the face, because he was to be blamed. I love the memory of Mr. Wesley, but I must love the truth better, and in that consideration must know no man after the flesh.

I have administered the Lord's supper twice here, and God has crowned the ordinance each time. Two sent notes of thanksgiving the last time for a sense of pardon; and I don't think any waited in vain. I permitted serious persons to be present each time, who did not communicate. I believe it was attended with good.

But nothing will move our bigots. I believe they use every means to keep the people away. They are encouraged by some preachers, and are made to believe that all will turn in their favour at the Conference, and that all I have done will meet with a fatal overthrow. How that will be, the event must prove. I wish every preacher to count the cost, and see the cause is right before he engages in it, and then to remain unshaken. - I am, my dear brother,

Your's affectionately,  
T. TAYLOR.

P.S. Give my love to Mr. Cownley; and tell him I am obliged to him for his letter. But tell him I would not have him now to sit by as an unconcerned spectator, but enter the lists fairly; and if he should sustain a few bruises, it is in a good cause. I dread our government falling into certain hands. For my part, I expect to be beaten till I am sore on all sides. But I remember one property of our English bull dog is, to die before he quits his hold. I am perfectly sure our cause is good. Engage all the lovers of Zion to pray. A few, I see, want to have pre-eminence, and they see no way of coming at it but by stickling for the church. May God Almighty maintain the right! T. T.

While Mr. Kilham was receiving from some of his brethren assistance and encouragement in the work he had undertaken, he had reason to apprehend, as Conference drew near, that attempts would be made to bring him into trouble for what he had done. This expectation he expressed in a letter written to R. C. Brackenbury, Esq., dated July 16, 1792, from which an extract may be taken:

“Most of our leaders, with the people, earnestly request to have the sacrament in the chapel here the next year. They would receive it after the Sunday evening preaching. We should not interfere with the church hours any more than we do. They are men of piety, and most of them men of good understanding; and the Conference cannot justly refuse their request. As the people begin to read and think for themselves, it is impossible to restrain them to the church as they have been. They only wish for liberty to worship God as they are persuaded will be most acceptable in his sight. This request is not to bind any from going to church, or other places, but for full liberty to all to follow the light the Lord has caused to shine into their hearts. I hope God will dispose our brethren to grant them what the bible and reason so powerfully recommend.

“By several letters we have lately received, I am apprehensive I shall be called up to London to answer for my conduct in writing and publishing the pamphlet. As the steps I have taken in this are according to the revealed will of God, I have no doubt but he will stand by me. If I had acted contrary to the truth of God, I should be apprehensive of danger; but as my rejoicing is in the testimony of my

conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, I have had my conversation among my brethren and in the world, I have no fear but God will stand by and own me. It seems strange to me that men who have professed to be accepted into the favour of God, and declare they now walk in the light of his countenance, should so violently oppose what is according to God and to the scriptures of truth."

The trial of Mr. Kilham, which took place on his arrival in London, was afterwards drawn up by himself with a view to publication; but he appears not to have printed it, probably at the request of Messrs. Bradburn, Taylor, and other of his friends at that time, who, although they felt strongly the impropriety of many of the proceedings of those who had the chief power at Conference, were unwilling the world should be made acquainted with the imperfections of the system. As, however, the public have seldom the means of observing the process of a Conference trial, and the grounds on which a sentence is pronounced against an offending brother by that assembly, it is the more necessary the judicial enquiry should be given. Besides the intrinsic evidence which it bears of being an authentic statement, at the conclusion of a short preface Mr. Kilham makes the subjoined appeal respecting the truth of his narrative—"The following is a faithful account of the trial. The author appeals to the preachers that were present for the truth of his assertions. He defies any preacher from disproving any thing that relates to the history."

Mr. Kilham having being called to the bar of Conference to answer for the publication of his pamphlet at Newcastle, Dr. Coke, in opening the business, observed that the memory of Mr. Wesley was so exceeding precious to them all, that no one would bear to hear anything said of him that was in the least prejudicial to his character. After he had spoken at some length on this subject, he proceeded to reflect on Mr. Kilham's pamphlet, as being a reproach upon Mr. Wesley. He declared it was like dragging his ashes from the tomb, and exposing them in a most infamous manner. He further

remarked, that what was said of Mr. Wesley was so contrary to truth, and so contrary to the opinion of the preachers and people, that none would hesitate a moment in condemning it as unjust, and worthy to be execrated. The pamphlet, he said, was written with a design to blacken the name of that excellent man, and to divide and destroy the work of God. He then charged the author with arrogance and pride, alleging how presumptuous it was in a person of his years to take such a step, under any circumstances, and how vile in the present case. He concluded by proposing, that if Mr. Kilham would not immediately confess his wickedness, and ask pardon of the Conference, he should be expelled the Connexion.

Mr. Thompson rose to second the motion, and to explain more fully the nature and design of the pamphlet. He entered into a long detail of the mischiefs it might cause in various respects. The pamphlet itself, he said, was designed to rend the Connexion; and if its author were permitted to pass with impunity, other persons might step forward and distress the cause with their heretical opinions. He thought the preachers ought in conscience to preserve the memory of Mr. Wesley, and to support their own characters, by condemning the book and its author.

Mr. Bradburn, in defence of Mr. Kilham, observed, that their proceedings were exceedingly unjustifiable. They were acting contrary to every thing he had ever seen. He declared no man ought to be condemned before he was heard; nor ought the pamphlet to be condemned before it was examined. He said, they all respected the memory of Mr. Wesley, and the author of the pamphlet as much as any of them. He noticed, that many then present had never seen it, and did not know what it contained. They were incapable of judging upon it, unless it was fairly read. They would degrade their judgment, if they passed sentence against a book of which they had no knowledge. He repeated, the pamphlet ought to be fairly read, and nothing should be done till the matter was examined. It was a serious business, and should not be passed over

without being properly attended to. None could object to a fair trial on the occasion.

With a good deal of difficulty, Mr. Kilham obtained permission to read a paper he had written, explaining what he had done, and what were the motives which induced him to take the part he had adopted. He observed, that soon after the death of Mr. Wesley, the Leaders and Trustees of the societies in Hull, wrote a circular letter in behalf of the old plan, and to prevail on other societies to determine against any alterations. That letter so grieved him, that he could not refrain from writing an answer to it. While he was considering how to circulate his reply as far as the other had spread, he was informed by a friend that the Leaders, &c. of the Newcastle society were preparing an answer to the letter. He therefore sent his by the next post to them, under a signature which they knew to be anonymous. They approved of his sentiments, made a few slight alterations in it, and published it with a postscript of their own. After his appointment to Newcastle, he laboured very peaceably with the people for several months. But when Mr. Cownley yielded to the pressing entreaties of the people, who wished to have the sacrament in their own chapel, and gave it them at Byker on the 8th of January, he found himself under the necessity of standing up in defence of Mr. Cownley's conduct. Mr. Grey and his friends violently opposed him, and did everything in their power, after they had left the society, to injure his character. Mr. Grey wrote him a letter full of abuse, which Mr. Cownley would neither read himself nor suffer to be read to him. He gave it to him (Mr. K.) to read, and to answer if he pleased. After he had read it with attention, he wrote an answer to Mr. Grey, which drew on a correspondence between them. When he thought the business was ended, Mr. Grey published the letters, and they were circulated far and near. Every clergyman had a copy of them sent to him, and they were given to any person they met with. As he (Mr. K.) was the principal person concerned in the dispute, he thought it his duty to write the pamphlet which was

then before the Conference, to explain more fully his own and the sentiments of many of his friends. He solemnly declared he had not the least design to injure the character of Mr. Wesley, but to show that they should not build too much upon any man, but only follow him as he followed Christ. After begging justice might be done him in this matter, he entreated the following favours at their hands, which he thought they could not equitably deny:—1st. That the correspondence between Mr. Grey and himself might be publicly read, with the pamphlet he had written; or that every preacher might read them in private before his trial came on. 2nd. That no detached word or sentence of any thing he had said might be brought against him, but that the sense of the passage might be fairly deduced from its connection with what preceded and with what followed. If that were not submitted to, he should look on himself as injured. He requested, in the 3rd place, that what he had said might be tried by the scriptures of truth, which would be the rule of judgment at the last day. He then appealed from human authority to the law and testimony, saying he should look upon himself as condemned unjustly, if they did not convict him from the oracles of God, and prove from that divine source of knowledge, that he had acted a part contrary to the Gospel. He then called on every person that favoured his righteous cause to come forth to his help; and offered, in conclusion, if they could convict him, that he had done wrong from the word of God, to make any submission they required. He did not mean to be stubborn. But he begged with all his heart that he might not be condemned without the clearest evidence.

This address produced a strong impression on the preachers, who were much moved. Dr. Coke even shed tears, and owned he felt himself greatly affected, and could not but weep while he heard what was advanced; but he said Mr. Wesley's character was so sacred, that nothing should by any means prevent justice from being done to it. He thought they ought to restrain their feelings on such an occasion, and to vindicate

the character of that most excellent man of God. He begged they would not act an unmanly part to their deceased father; but show themselves his friends on that occasion. For his part, he could not look on the author of that pamphlet as worthy of a place with them, unless he would offer something as a compensation for what he had done. And he thought still, he ought to be expelled unless he would submit to confess himself a transgressor, and promise amendment.

It was then desired by many of the preachers, that the pamphlet might at once be fairly read through. They thought they ought in justice to know what it contained, before they could sit as judges upon it. Many of them were ignorant of everything it contained, and could by no means act with propriety unless they were acquainted with the matter of the pamphlet. But this request was not complied with. It was then proposed, that the passages might be read which were objected to, and that they should be fully examined. Dr. Coke then stood up and read what were regarded as the worst parts of the pamphlet, which were the following:—"We have often been represented as enemies to Mr. Wesley, and the interests of Methodism, but this charge is exceedingly unjust. We declare in the sight of God, and before all the world, that his *memory* is exceeding dear to us. We are conscious he was much owned of God, and signally blessed to thousands in his labours. But we cannot think Mr. Wesley was infallible. The doctrines essential to salvation, he explained and enforced with great judgment and success; and the discipline he established in his societies, is hardly to be equalled in any denomination of Christians in the world. His plan of changing preachers so frequently, has been productive of the happiest effects. But is it reasonable to suppose, that Mr. Wesley, amidst so many excellencies, had no infirmities? Shall we consider his determinations as conclusive in every thing, and follow his council, without daring to examine it by the word of God? Are we enemies to this great apostolical man, because we think he held *some notions* which are not founded on the Scriptures;



and are now desirous of laying them aside? If we were to take every thing he has said, and maintain it with warmth against his opponents, we might be justly reproached as enemies to the character we wish to establish."

The second passage is in the fifth page, as follows:—"Our Connexion has not reached the perfection which is held out to us in the Gospel. Several things must be removed and others substituted in their place, to bring about the desired end. If a few *bigoted persons, who never think for themselves*, call this innovation, every sensible man will highly esteem our conduct."

The third passage is in the 20th page, as follows:—"It appears that our being closely united with the established Church, is founded on reasons not justifiable on the Scriptures. It is more honourable to attend service at the church, than to worship among the Dissenters; it takes away a good deal of the scandal of the cross; it may be advantageous to our business in the world; it may bring us to fill up places in the nation, which may be greatly helpful to our families, that we could not occupy, were we Dissenters of any denomination. Our being connected so closely with the church, cannot be looked on in any other light than a species of trimming between God and the world. We never met with any arguments for continuing closely united with the church, but what are political, or, in other words, carnal, and sold under sin."

After these passages were distinctly read, Dr. Coke entered upon an explanation of the first of them. He observed, there was a great deal of art and ingenuity in what was advanced. Several things were said of Mr. Wesley that were great and glorious. But he begged every person would attend to the design of them. It was only to gild over what was intended to poison and corrupt their minds. The first part of the passage he approved with all his heart, but that Mr. Wesley held notions contrary to the Scriptures, was a vile slander upon his character. It was a character he never deserved, and was so contrary to truth, that every person must be shocked at hearing it. For his part, it

brought such conviction to his mind of the author's guilt, that he would not, in consequence, give him the right hand of fellowship, unless he would own his offence, and behave with circumspection in future. He desired that the sense of the Conference might be taken, and judgment passed accordingly.

Mr. Moore said he was surprised at what the Dr. had uttered. He had never seen the pamphlet until it had been put into his hand while the Dr. was speaking. He said he had no knowledge of its author, nor any connection with him, and wished from his heart every thing of that nature had been kept from the public. But he was bound by principles of justice to see a person have fair play. He observed, the Dr. had read the words improperly, and then read them himself as they were written. The author only asked, "Are we enemies to this great apostolic man, because we think he held some notions not founded on the Scriptures?" He said, these words did not assert Mr. Wesley did hold such notions. It was a question which intimated the writer supposed he held some notions not founded on the word of God. He said, whether it was right or not to publish that Mr. Wesley held such notions, he was sure there was not a person in the assembly but believed he held many notions which were not founded upon Scripture. It would be an insult upon their understandings to say he did not. He would name several subjects on which Mr. Wesley had advanced notions which had no connection with the Scriptures, and was astonished how any person could criminate the author of the pamphlet for saying modestly, "we think he held notions not founded on Scripture." Mr. Moore spoke at some length on the subject, and before he concluded, declared again, that he wished every man might be dealt fairly with who had any cause to try in that place. It would be a disgrace to them to act contrary to truth and uprightness.

Mr. Thompson rose to vindicate Dr. Coke's remarks. He observed, Mr. Wesley was a very great and good man; his character was sacred. No man ought to allow himself that liberty in speaking and writing which

was manifest in the pamphlet before them. He declared, for his part, he would not countenance the conduct of persons who spoke and wrote against men of such distinguished piety and abilities. He then denounced the book, and declared that it ought to be execrated by every man in that Conference. He then entered into a history of the labours and sufferings of Mr. Wesley, and called for the production of those notions which it was alleged Mr. Wesley held contrary to the Scriptures. Mr. Bradburn begged they would investigate the business with moderation, and not suffer any undue warmth to warp their judgment. He said the author would bring forth his notions if they would give him time, and then they might examine whether they were founded on the Scriptures or not.

The following views were then presented to the Conference, upon the sacrament, &c., that Mr. Wesley held, and which Mr. Kilham declared, according to his judgment, were not founded upon Scripture; nor were they supported by reason. He said, Mr. Wesley held, in the first place, that the Methodist preachers were called of God to preach the gospel, and form societies. They were to watch over the souls committed to their charge with great diligence and care. They were to do every thing they could to help them in the way to heaven. But they had no right to give them the sacrament. They had no call from God to this. It was not their place to meddle with the ordinances.

In the second place, they were not to preach in church hours on any pretence whatever, unless in very singular cases; but were to go to church, and take their people with them. They were not to give the sacrament to any, but go to the church with their people to receive that ordinance wherever they could. Thirdly, where the preacher neither preached nor lived the gospel, they ought to go to church. It was said the ordinance was not in the least injured by an ungodly minister giving it; even if the persons sitting down to the table were like himself, no Methodist ought to scruple in these cases. The preachers ought to lead

the way, and attend with as many of the society as possible. This he strictly required, as was known to them all. In the last place, he held and taught, that if ever the Methodists left the church, God would leave them. They would naturally lose the life of God, and dwindle away into dull, dry morality. They would become like other Dissenters, having only the form, while they were destitute of the power of godliness.

Mr. Thompson then declared that one passage called every person biggoted that did not think as its author did; and it was a reflection upon all the preachers. He then called on his brethren to agree in condemning a person who had dared to reflect on their character in that manner. Mr. Mather took up the pamphlet, and read the title page. "An address to the Members and Friends of the Methodist Society in Newcastle." He said no person who attended to the title of the book, could suppose that it was a reflection on the preachers. He then called on Mr. Kilham to answer them whether he meant the people in society, &c., or the whole Connexion; and Mr. K. answered that his principal design was to address the society of Methodists, which was the immediate object of his writing it; but if any person choose to apply it to himself, he could have no objection.

Mr. Benson, who had hitherto taken no part in the discussion, said there would be no end in going forward in that manner. They had not set out at first on a right plan, and would never be able to proceed to their satisfaction unless they altered their ground. It was not the matter of the pamphlet which they had so much to do with. That might not be found contrary to truth, yet the person who wrote it might be worthy of blame. He moved that they should adopt another mode of trying the matter. He thought all that was required was this, to take the sense of the Conference whether they thought Mr. Kilham had done right or wrong in writing the pamphlet. He thought this would be the shortest and the most effectual way to proceed in the business. This proposal was received with approbation. A majority of the Conference censured the author, as

having done wrong \* in writing the pamphlet ; and the Chairman then received authority to pronounce it as the sense of the house, that Mr. Kilham had acted imprudently in writing and publishing the pamphlet.

Mr. Thompson then moved that the book should be condemned as well as its author. He said, it availed nothing passing sentence upon the writer, unless the work, too, was censured. This occasioned several warm debates. Mr. Benson thought they had acted a very cowardly part, in passing by Mr. Bradburn and Mr. Taylor ; and intimated that they ought to have been tried first for what they had written. He declared, if that pamphlet were censured, all the pamphlets and sermons that related to the subject ought also to be condemned. It was acting with partiality to condemn one, and let the others pass with impunity. Of the three pamphlets written on the subject, that which they were about to condemn was, in his judgment, the most innocent. Mr. Moore said, he would not give his consent for Mr. Kilham's pamphlet to be condemned, unless all the pamphlets and sermons, with the circular

\* The ground on which the sentence of condemnation was placed is not very intelligible. From what Mr. Benson said,—and which seemed to be concurred in by the majority of Conference,—the censure had no reference to the contents of the pamphlet, as being true or otherwise, but the simple act of writing and publishing was what they blamed. This must either have been because Mr. Kilham was a junior preacher, and therefore they deemed it improper that he should have taken upon himself to exercise a judgment on the subject ; or, secondly, because they supposed it impolitic for the blemishes of Methodism to have been exposed by one of themselves ; or, thirdly, as a warning for the future against preachers—the younger ones more especially—calling in question the propriety of any of the rules or usages of the Connexion. At all events, to justify the conduct of Conference towards Mr. Kilham in this instance, some one of the following propositions must be affirmed. 1. That Mr. Wesley was infallible, and every part of the discipline of Methodism strictly scriptural ; or, 2, that in case of there being any defect or inconsistencies in the system, they were to be continued or kept secret, and not pointed out with a view to their being remedied ; or, 3, that whatever there might be which was objectionable, a preacher so young as Mr. Kilham (he was then thirty years old) was deserving of censure for interfering at all ; or in other words, even if he were right as to his statements, the mere act of making them was wrong in respect of himself. It would seem that the last of these three particulars was what the Conference maintained against Mr. Kilham,—whether properly or not, the reader may form his own judgment.

letters on both sides, were likewise condemned, not excepting Dr. Coke's Ordination sermon, which he preached in America. Mr. Thompson declared (but his words were never accomplished) that Mr. Bradburn and Mr. Taylor should both be tried, and their pamphlets be condemned also. He contended, that as they had tried and censured the author, they ought to go through with their work, and leave the others to some future opportunity.

Mr. Kilham then addressed the Conference, desiring that no preacher would degrade his judgment so far as to condemn what he did not know. He begged of them to consider what they were going to do. It would be a stain on their characters if they suffered themselves to be dragged into a measure so contrary to their own interests. How would they face God or their conscience in condemning what they had no knowledge of?

The motion was, however, put, and a majority of the preachers rose up to condemn the book, as designed to spread division and dissension among the Methodist societies.

It was then considered what punishment should be inflicted upon the author. Mr. Mather, from the chair, informed Mr. Kilham of what the Conference had done, and the censure they had passed upon him and his pamphlet; and desired he would make some acknowledgment, and ask forgiveness as far as he could consistent with judgment and conscience. He was then requested to retire, and bring, in writing, after he had prayed to God for direction, how far he might deem himself culpable, with respect to the things which had been alleged against him. They entreated him not to be stiff, but to own his offence with candour and openness, that he might be continued with approbation among them.

Mr. Kilham having retired, soon brought the following confession in writing before them. He declared solemnly that he highly honoured and loved Mr. Wesley. He was sure he felt as much affection for him as any in that place. He was born in the same town, had known him from a child, and had always loved

and honoured him. He declared, he had not the least thought of slandering the character of Mr. Wesley; nor was he convinced that anything he had said was a reproach to that excellent man of God. He wrote the pamphlet to vindicate that faithful and worthy servant of God, Mr. Cownley, from the reproach which was poured upon him, and to maintain the truth against the opinions of Mr. Grey and his friends. He had written chiefly for these reasons. He believed he had done the will of God in writing the reply to the Hull letter, and in writing that pamphlet; and he was sure the Lord did not condemn him for it. If he confessed any other, he should lie against his own conscience. He then owned he was grieved, that he had given the Conference any pain or trouble; and though he was confident the Lord did not condemn him, yet he was willing to own he was sorry, that he had taken any steps that had offended them, and hoped they would forgive anything they could not approve in his conduct. He added, though he had then an opportunity of fixing to his temporal advantage, if he chose to leave the Connexion, yet he was determined to continue as long as he could with a good conscience. And however some of them might look on him as a consequential person in his own eyes, he was their servant for Christ's sake. He acted from conviction in what they opposed, and was willing to bear any censure they pleased to load him with.

Mr. Thompson and Dr. Coke, with others, said it was no confession, but a justification of what he had done. It was only an acknowledgement that he was sorry he had grieved them. He was not sorry he had done wrong, but gloried in the answer of his conscience.

Mr. Bradburn and other preachers declared it was quite sufficient. The sense of the Conference was then taken, and a great majority rose up to show they accepted the confession. This business was then considered as finished.

Mr. Killham's frame of mind, when expecting to undergo the trial of which an outline has been given, and

the purposes he formed respecting his conduct, if required to give an account of what he had done, will be ascertained from the annexed prayer, which he made and inscribed in his diary shortly before the Conference began:—

“Now, O Lord, if thou sufferest me to go to the Conference, enable me to bear insult and reproach with patience, and give me grace to render good for evil; and help me to speak boldly and calmly in thy name, on subjects that require courage and firmness. Let me never desert the cause that is for thy glory, and the good of thy church: thou canst purge our Connexion, and make us holy and unblameable before thee. O God, do thou enlighten the minds of the people, that they may see the privileges of the gospel, and embrace them. Incline the preachers to give liberty to the societies; and let every thing that belongs to arbitrary power be removed from their minds. Dispose us, O Lord, to examine our doctrines and discipline by thy unerring word of truth, and to expunge every thing that is contrary to thy will. If any charges are brought against me at the Conference, help me to defend my character and thy truth, O Lord; through grace I am determined to be thine for ever. Bless our Connexion and thy church every where, through Jesus Christ our Lord. 13th July, 1792.”

The proceedings just detailed may be left to make their own impression on the mind of the reader, without in the least endangering the reputation of Mr. Kilham, who, although in one sense condemned, was, in regard to his cause and conduct, so manifestly in the right, that there can be little doubt of his having been more satisfied in his conscience with his defeat, than his accusers were with the victory they had gained over him. It would indeed be difficult to show that the crime for which he was cited to Conference to submit to the foregoing trial and reprimand, was any other than what the Reformers were guilty of in the sixteenth century; and, moreover, the same may be laid to the charge of all who hold Protestant principles to this day. He seems to have offended in two points—first,



in making an avowal that Mr. Wesley, though a most useful, great, and holy man, was, notwithstanding these high qualities, not infallible. Second, in saying that the Methodist plan, though eminently good in its general character, included some things which had better be changed; and that in order to be safe it would be proper, as the Connexion was entering upon a new era, to bring the whole system to the test of Scripture, for the purpose of modifying it by the word of God. We see no other offence of which Mr. Kilham was guilty; and some such impression was evidently on the minds of his accusers; who, feeling he could not with decency be condemned on these grounds, changed the accusation; and, on the recommendation of Mr. Benson, it was maintained against him that his writing at all was reprehensible—that the correctness or incorrectness of what he had said was out of the question—the fact itself of his having published any thing on the subject was wrong—and for this, and this only, he was condemned.

Besides the insufficient grounds, as he conceived, for censuring him, Mr. Kilham regarded himself as having been unfairly dealt with by the Conference in another respect. Two of the preachers (Mr. Bradburn and Mr. Thomas Taylor), besides himself, had published pamphlets on the same subject; and both their names had to be called over at the Conference before his: consequently, charges should have been preferred against them in the first instance, but they were passed over without observation, and Mr. Kilham, who should have taken his trial the third in rotation, was criminated the first—and either it was never intended to try the others, or by the time the Conference had disposed of his case, it was so tired of the subject, that the matter was dropped, and neither Mr. Bradburn nor Mr. Taylor was called to account. It will have been observed, that the former stood firmly by Mr. Kilham during his examination, and contributed greatly to his defence.

At this Conference another extraordinary step was taken with respect to the sacrament. After the question whether it should be administered or not in those

chapels where the members of society requested it, had been discussed at great length, without the probability of any decision being come to which would be generally satisfactory, Mr. Pawson proposed for the matter to be determined, for the ensuing year, by drawing "the lot." This suggestion, being made at a moment when almost all the members of Conference were weary of debating the subject, was received by the generality as if it had come by inspiration; and after prayer the lot was drawn by Mr. (afterwards Dr. Adam) Clarke, and proved to be as follows:—"There shall be no sacrament in the Methodist Connexion as it refers to England the next year, unless when a clergyman officiates in London." When this decision by lot was announced, a majority of the Conference signified their concurrence, and directed that a letter should be drawn up and addressed to the societies, that it might be understood how the matter had been determined. The minutes of Conference for 1792 notice the lot in these words:—

"After debating the subject time after time, we were greatly divided in sentiment. In short, we knew not what to do, that peace and union might be preserved. At last one of the senior brethren (Mr. Pawson) proposed that we should commit the matter to God by putting the question to the lot, considering that the Oracles of God declare, that 'the Lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty:'\* And again, that 'the Lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord:† And considering also that we have the example of the Apostles themselves, in a matter which we thought, all things considered, of less importance.

"We accordingly prepared the lots; and four of us prayed. God was surely then present, yea, his glory filled the room. Almost all the preachers were in tears, and, as they afterwards confessed, felt an undoubted assurance that God himself would decide. Mr. Adam Clarke was then called on to draw the lot, which was,

\* Prov. xviii. 18.

† Prov. xvi. 33.

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\* Prov. xviii. 18.

† Prov. xvi. 33.

‘You shall not administer the Sacrament the ensuing year.’ All were satisfied. All submitted. All was peace. Every countenance seemed to testify that every heart said, ‘It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.’ A minute was then formed according to the previous explanation of the lots, that the sacrament should not be administered in our Connexion, for the ensuing year, except in London.”

To say that all were satisfied, was going too far. Mr. Kilham was one of the few preachers present who regarded the lot as unauthorised and wrong as applied to the Lord’s Supper; believing that as the observance of it was expressly enjoined in the New Testament, the duty was plain and imperative, and that it ought not to have been dealt with in any such manner. The use of the lot, he maintained, could only have been justified, had there been no guide to a proper conclusion, which was not the case with regard to the Lord’s Supper. He always condemned this mode of decision, and though the societies submitted to it for that once, it was with great reluctance and dissatisfaction; which were so evident that the expedient was not repeated the following year.

The letters and petitions from the people to this Conference were almost as numerous as those sent the preceding year; and they were similarly disposed of, viz., destroyed without having been read.

Mr. Kilham was appointed to Aberdeen in Scotland, where he continued to be stationed the three following years.

## CHAPTER V.

FROM CONFERENCE 1792, TO CONFERENCE 1795, WHEN  
MR. KILHAM LABOURED IN SCOTLAND.

It was at the particular request of Conference that Mr. Kilham consented to go to Scotland, which, on account of the small progress Methodism had made in that kingdom, had never been a favourite field of labour with the preachers. It is not, however, unlikely, that the decision of Conference respecting the sacrament in England, had contributed to his willingness to be stationed there, as the Lord's Supper was freely administered by the preachers to all the societies North of the Tweed. The presumption, too, seems to be well founded, that those who had observed the zeal of Mr. Kilham, in procuring this ordinance for the Methodists generally, were also naturally anxious that he should not be placed in England, where, by opposing scriptural liberty to Conference restrictions, he might occasion them some uneasiness. For their sakes, as well as his own, he was glad of the opportunity of labouring in a part where he could fulfil all the duties of his office, without becoming liable to trial and condemnation for so doing.

Mr. Kilham's removal to Aberdeen was delayed for a few weeks by the state of Mrs. Kilham, who was confined of their third child shortly after Conference, at Newcastle. The infant being a boy was named Samuel, after the one which had died about a year before. He thus speaks of his entrance upon his new circuit : "Having, by the blessing of God, arrived safe at Aberdeen with my wife and children, I opened my mission on the 27th of October, and preached three times ; I had much liberty, and the people appeared satisfied. If I had been an angel from heaven, they could not have received me with greater affection, and I found

my spirit greatly revived and blessed amongst them. When I reflected on the kindness of God, in bringing us safely to this place, the reception I met with, and the prospect before me of doing good, I was fully satisfied with my situation." On the same subject he further observes: "Everything appeared strange to us on our first going into Scotland. But the kindness of the people, and the privileges we enjoyed, more than compensated for every difficulty we were called to encounter. My wife soon found her mind perfectly reconciled to the place, and thankful to God for bringing us into such a peaceable situation. She endeavoured to shew her love to God and his cause, by filling her station, in the church and her family, to his glory."

While Mr. Kilham advocated the claims of the Methodists to have the sacrament at the hands of their own ministers, he seems to have been of opinion that ordination, by the laying on of hands, was required as a qualifying authority for a preacher to administer that ordinance. The same, indeed, was generally held by those who had contended for the sacrament, and in pursuance of such conviction several of them procured ordination. This was derived intermediately from Mr. Wesley, who had ordained Dr. Coke, Mr. Mather, Mr. Cownley, Mr. Moore, and other preachers, with the view to some of them officiating in America, and others in Scotland;—and they conceived themselves entitled afterwards to perform the same act on such of their brethren as desired it. In this way Mr. Bradburn, Mr. T. Taylor, Mr. Atmore, and others, had undergone the ceremony of laying on of hands; and while in the Newcastle Circuit, Mr. Kilham and Mr. Gaulter were ordained by Mr. Cownley and Mr. Atmore. On being stationed in Scotland, where there was no restraint upon the Methodists in reference to the Lord's Supper, Mr. Kilham began to administer it to the societies, and the satisfaction which he observed amongst them in the use of this ordinance, with the blessing of God which often accompanied it, tended more than ever to confirm him in the belief that it ought to be freely given to the members of all Christian churches;

and that every obstacle thrown in the way of their receiving it, was an interference with their just privileges under the New Testament.

In being appointed to labour in Scotland, where the Presbyterian form of church government was established, in which the clergy and laity co-operated in every department, Mr. Kilham had the opportunity of observing how that system worked; and of contrasting it with the Methodist plan, which vested the power of legislation, and the enforcement of discipline, exclusively in the preachers. And it is highly probable, that what he saw confirmed him in a conviction that by uniting the above excellent presbyterian principle, of letting the ministers and people always act together, with those parts of Methodism which related to doctrines, itineracy, and class-meetings, they should most effectually secure the peace, satisfaction, and permanent prosperity of the societies. The right of the Methodists to have the sacrament in their own chapels, had, hitherto, been all that had been contended for by Mr. Kilham and others; but his views now began to be extended beyond this ordinance to the relative situation of the preachers and people, and he felt that unless some means were adopted for limiting the authority of the former over the latter, it were vain to expect that its abuse would be prevented. He thought he saw the irresponsible power which the preachers had, producing injurious effects in various ways, and unless it were checked, he feared still worse consequences. A few months after his arrival at Aberdeen, and as soon as he could spare a little time, when he had laid his plans for being useful in that circuit, of which he was the superintendent, his active mind set to work to draw the attention of the body to a number of evils which he conceived to have resulted from their present rules. This he did in a circular letter, which he printed under the signature of "Trueman and Freeman," and sent to the most influential persons throughout the Connexion. In this letter, after noticing the ineffectual efforts which had been made by a number of societies, who had addressed memorials and petitions to Conference, to



obtain a redress of grievances, but which petitions he states, on a motion made by a certain preacher, had been destroyed without examination, by the vote of a majority of Conference—Mr. Kilham starts this question in the name of the members generally—"Would it not be proper for us to have some concern in managing such matters as materially affect ourselves?" He then proceeds to show what alterations should be made in the appointment of leaders, stewards, local preachers; in the management of the temporal affairs of the circuit; and in taking out preachers to travel: and instead of the sole authority being, as it then was, with the preachers, he suggested that every thing should be done by a majority at meetings composed of the preachers and officers in the societies or circuits. He also added—

"Would it not be proper for every circuit, or every district, to be represented in Conference by a delegate of its own choosing? He could carry in the collections, see how the monies are expended, and would be able to give a particular account of our money matters, to such of our friends who might wish to be informed. These delegates should be present when the preachers' characters are examined, and when they are stationed for their circuits. They would furnish the Conference with much useful information, and prevent many improper appointments, and see that our funds are rightly managed. Honesty will never shrink from responsibility."

In support of these proposed changes, it was alleged, that if the people had representatives in Conference, the funds contributed by the societies would in many respects be more judiciously expended, and other benefits realised, which would have an important influence on the Connexion. The letter concluded with the following exhortations:—

"If the preachers had paid a proper degree of attention to your addresses last year, we should not have troubled you with these observations. We have written freely, without the least design of doing any harm to the cause. On the contrary, we have been influenced by a desire of doing good. If success should attend

our endeavours, God shall have the praise ; but if not, we shall at least have the testimony of our conscience, that our attempt was well meant. We have now done our part towards the reform of the above-mentioned abuses. Do you yours. Enlighten the people. Read or lend this letter to as many of them as you possibly can, and do not suffer yourselves to be discouraged by timorous or interested men. In so doing, you will contribute to the prosperity of Methodism, and do honour to God."

This circular, as it attempted to account in some measure for the disturbed state of the Connexion, by ascribing it to the circumstance of the sole authority being in the preachers, could not fail to lead many into whose hands it went, to become more intent upon ascertaining the correctness of that view of the matter ; and it was in all probability the means of preparing the minds of many to concur in those plans which were afterwards proposed for remedying the evil, by admitting the people to share the government with the preachers. Many enquiries were made respecting the authorship of this address, but though several of Mr. Kilham's confidential friends knew him to have been the writer, the secret was kept until such time that he did not care to acknowledge its paternity.

In removing to a new circuit, and more especially if it be very distant from his former station, a Methodist preacher, going amongst a strange people, is in danger of being misled in his opinions respecting the characters of particular individuals or societies, should he happen at first to lend his ear to prejudiced individuals ; who often present themselves on his arrival, and officiously volunteer to inform him of the persons with whom he will have to do in the different places where he has to labour. The parties who shew this readiness to make his acquaintance, will frequently be found to have a two-fold object, viz.,—to prepossess him with a favourable estimation of themselves, which they may not deserve ; and to set him against others, of whose influence they may be jealous. If a preacher allow his mind to

be biassed, and much more if he begin at once to act under the advice of such persons, he is not only liable greatly to hinder his own usefulness, but to commit injustice towards some of the most worthy and pious members of society. When Mr. Kilham went to Aberdeen, had he not been prevented by his own good sense, and a feeling of what was due to others from him as a minister of the Gospel, he would have fallen into the above error, in consequence of communications made to him by an individual whom he afterwards faithfully reprehended for his conduct. This person, who was a local preacher, and belonged to the society at Newburg, had, it seems, quarrelled with several of the leaders; and on Mr. Kilham being appointed as superintendent of the circuit, he made representations respecting them, which, if they had been well founded, would have shewn them to be unworthy of a place in the Church. After saying what he thought would be sufficient to induce Mr. Kilham to exercise his power to excommunicate, he suggested the following method of treating the objects of his dislike; which it is best to give in the words of Mr. Kilham, in a letter reprimanding the party after he had become fully acquainted with the case:—

“You proposed a plan to me, which I never think of without wonder, that a man of your sense should give place to prejudice so far as to wish it might be adopted. It is the same plan the Inquisition pursues at Rome, and the old French government pursued to fill the Bastile with state prisoners. You proposed for me to receive your testimony, and the testimony of another or two, and then expel the accused out of our society without giving them to know who were their accusers. This plan you were pleased to call a good one, and recommended it to me, if I could follow it. But you remember I spurned the very thought of it; I told you I would give up preaching before I would act such a part. No person should be put out of society without having a hearing. The very Romans did not condemn unheard, and we would not be worse than the Heathens. \* \* \* As you would not bring evidence

against the persons you accused, nor have them before me, you were angry because I could not in conscience comply with your proposal."

Now if, instead of treating this man's recommendation, as he did, with the reprobation which it deserved, Mr. Kilham had been disposed, from whatever motive, to have carried his wishes into effect, he could have done so without being accountable to any one, the preachers having the absolute power to exclude members whenever they chose to exercise it. This was one of the things which he was convinced ought not to be, because it made every person in society dependent on him for the continuance of his membership, and in case of his becoming unjustly prejudiced, or inclined to act arbitrarily, the people had no remedy against an act which might deprive them of their christian privileges, and perhaps of their characters also.

Mr. and Mrs. Kilham had, during the first year of their residence in Scotland, to undergo the loss of another child, which he mentions in these words:—"After we had spent about ten months in Aberdeen, it pleased God to call our second Samuel to himself. He died of the measles. This was a very trying scene to us both. We endeavoured to offer him to God, as we had done the child that died in Newcastle, and found power to surrender him freely to the Giver of all our mercies. Before his death, we were enabled to say from our hearts, 'Thy will be done.' It is probable, however, that the fatigue she had during the child's affliction and death, with what she felt in her mind on account of his removal, laid the foundation of a nervous disorder, which, in the end, called her to join her friends and children in another world."

While in Aberdeen Mr. Kilham published a small pamphlet against horse racing, card playing, and theatrical and similar entertainments, on the ground of their immoral tendency. This tract, as he might have expected, brought upon him a host of adversaries from amongst the patrons of such amusements; and though he found his assailants difficult to deal with, his ingenuity devised means to manage them with better success than he proba-

bly feared he should have done, when he was first apprised of the mode in which they were about to attack him. No sooner had the appearance of Mr. Kilham's piece been advertised, than the players, who happened to be performing in the place at the time, considered how they might retaliate upon the author for this interference with their profession; and as great strictness in religion, and especially Methodist preachers, have often been regarded as choice objects of ridicule by a certain description of persons, this was deemed a fine opportunity for holding up Mr. Kilham to the laughter of the public, by personating him in the character of Cantwell in the play called the "Hypocrite." This comedy was immediately put in rehearsal, for what purpose was soon understood; and while it was preparing, two of the players went to Mr. Kilham's house on the pretext of obtaining one of his pamphlets, but in reality to notice his appearance, that the most fitting individual in the company might be appointed to personate him on the stage. On the Saturday before the "Hypocrite" was to be performed, one of the play-bills was sent to Mr. Kilham, and he states that he went to bed taxing his ingenuity to find out some method of counter-acting their design. "In the morning," he says, "after much anxiety, I resolved to preach from a passage in their bill." He accordingly, at the conclusion of the early meeting at the chapel, announced his intention to deliver a discourse from this uncommon text, that same evening. The chapel was crowded to excess, and most of the players were also present. After reading from the playbill the passage—referring to hypocrisy in religion—from which he was about to speak, Mr. Kilham apologised for deviating on that occasion from the usual practice of taking a portion of Scripture for his text, by citing a few instances of pulpit discourses having been grounded on incidents which justified particular notice, and might be applied to the edification and profit of the audience. He then added, "I have this night stepped out of our ordinary way, and chosen for my text, a passage in the play-bill which will be circulated through this city to-morrow. At nine o'clock

last night, a gentleman was kind enough to send it to me. Do not be shocked, my dear brethren, at my taking a text from a play-bill, for I hope, in the course of my sermon, to justify every thing I advance, from the word of God." Having thus introduced the subject, he proceeded, 1. To describe the character of a hypocrite, which he admitted might belong to some who professed religion. 2. He proved the injustice of making general and sweeping charges of hypocrisy against all strict professors, which was confounding the bad and the good.—Under this head he showed that there was such a thing as genuine religion, and sincerity in its profession; and that as the reality existed as well as the counterfeit, indiscriminate imputations of falsehood were indefensible. 3. That the truly pious and devout Christian was a great and valuable character. In this discourse, Mr. Kilham, knowing that, drawn by mere curiosity, many present were not in the custom of hearing the gospel faithfully preached, contrived, in a very ingenious, and at the same time natural manner, to treat his subject so as to introduce and explain the leading principles of religion; and by delivering himself in a christian spirit, and with a manifest desire for their salvation—the impression could hardly be otherwise than favourable, both as to his motives and abilities. A short passage or two may be given, where he presses the subject upon his hearers towards the conclusion of the sermon :

"As there is such a thing as true religion, expressing itself in the tempers and conversation of all that possess it, let us seek this while we have time and opportunity. Except we obtain a living faith in the Lord Jesus, which will work by love, purifying our hearts, we cannot be happy or safe. Let us, then, renounce everything which we know to be sinful, and come to God in the way he has appointed, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need."

"Let us not be ashamed of openly avowing our sentiments to the world. Many may suppose we are a people who carry our opinions too far. They consider

us as singular in our conduct, and you may think we are *enthusiastical*, because we *cry out* against the amusements which others contend for. You may imagine, that we ought to let people alone, and permit them to go in the way which they think right, without *disturbing* their quiet—But should we be justified in the sight of God, if we were ashamed to declare our minds fully on these subjects? We are commanded to warn sinners of their danger, and to *intreat them to flee from the wrath to come*. We are fully persuaded, it is *sinful* to attend the play-house. Theatrical amusements in general are exceedingly contrary to vital religion, and we consider all who attend them *in danger* of losing their souls. We are to warn them faithfully, that *their blood may not be required at our hands*. Can you suppose our being singular on these subjects, is of any advantage to us? Are we not *mocked* and *despised* even by many who *call* themselves christians, because we are *resolved* to use our influence to prevent these evils? Is it any plea—on the streets, because of his religious opinions? I sure to a man to be *derided* and *reproached*, as he walks cannot go from my house into any part of *this city*, but I am a *laughing stock* to many. They *shake their heads* to each other, and reproach me *for being righteous over much*,—but shall I shrink from my duty *because of these things*? God forbid. I am not in the least afraid or ashamed to *declare the whole council of God, according to my ability*. You may *curse* me as I pass on the streets; you may *act me on the stage*—you may *do what you please with me*—I am determined, in the midst of *all your insults*, to seek your salvation. While you reproach me and my brethren, we will *plead with God* for the blessings of the Gospel to rest on your heads.”

“Do not *mistake* me, my brethren. We do not *hate* the persons who act on the stage. We have no malice in our hearts against them. God is our witness, we speak these things for their welfare; and *wish* them every privilege *purchased by Christ Jesus*. We believe their conduct is contrary to the will of God, and that they are likely to *ruin themselves*, and *those* who follow them. By their present pursuits, they greatly injure

themselves and the public. Many of them are men of *excellent parts*, with a *good education*, and might be useful in various departments in life, were they delivered from the influence of their present infatuation. And should they call me a *canting hypocrite*, on account of what I have said since we met together, it will not move me—I will *still study* to render them *good* for the *evil* they may do to me, or to any of my brethren.”

“ We shall all soon appear before the *judgment seat* of Christ, and then it will *be known* who is in the right. I call on all that hear me this night, in the name of the Lord Jesus, *to come out from among them and be separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and to escape for their life* from every place *where they might receive a deadly hurt* to their souls.”

The Tuesday evening following, was the time announced for the performance of the “ Hypocrite ” on the stage ; but on the Monday—the day after the sermon had been preached—the manager appeared as if he felt reason to think he had taken a false step in the choice of the play. That respect for religion, owing to education and moral principle, which so generally prevails in Scotland, began to show itself ; and many whom the players had expected to gratify by the performance, were displeased at their project to cast ridicule upon a minister of the gospel. However, as the comedy had been advertised, it was determined to proceed to act it ; but when the time came, the public opinion was clearly manifested ; —the boxes and the pit had not more than ten persons in them, and the gallery was only half filled. They also changed their purpose in regard to personating Mr. Kilham, and instead of him, an individual was introduced (dressed as a minister) who was made to say, he “ came from Dundee, sometimes preached, sometimes made candles, and sometimes sold tobacco, or did any thing to obtain his bread.” The performance went heavily forward, and the theatre closed about an hour earlier than usual. The play had been announced to be acted twice, but no repetition took place ; and on the whole, this attempt to bring the laugh of the public upon Mr. Kilham was as complete a failure as he could



have desired. The sermon was published a few days after it had been preached, and, considering the hurry in which it had been prepared, both for the pulpit and the press, it entitled him to great credit, and had an extensive sale. Mr. Kilham's remarks against horse-racing, cards, and dancing, were replied to by two or three persons, who published short tracts on the opposite side of the subject, which he again answered, and the controversy dropped.

Mr. Kilham did not attend the Conference which was held at Leeds, in 1793, but he had largely corresponded during the year, on topics affecting the government of the body, and on the subject of the sacrament, with the principal brethren in England who favoured the claims of the societies to that ordinance; and such an accession of strength on that side had been gained, both among the preachers and people, that the Conference found it necessary to suspend the decision of the "lot," and to pass the following resolution, which, though expressed in negative terms, and placed on an almost impossible condition, viz., that of perfect unanimity in the society, nevertheless conceded something,—and on that account was better than the absolute prohibition which had been in force from the last Conference. It was decided by a large majority—

"That the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall not be administered by the preachers in any part of our Connexion, except where the whole society is unanimous for it, and *will not be contented without it*; and, in even those few exempt societies, it shall be administered, as far as practicable, in the evening only, and according to the form of the Church of England."

By a letter from Mr. Bradburn to Mr. Kilham, it will be observed, that while the friends of liberty received this as being all they could obtain at that time, it was regarded merely as an earnest of still greater concessions which were expected to follow:

*Bristol, December 12, 1793.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Through the mercy of God, I am returned in safety to this city, after an absence of six weeks, which I spent to good

purpose, in visiting the churches in Taunton, Callumpton, Plymouth, St. Austle, Redruth, and Penzance circuits. Blessed be the Lord, the good cause is prospering in every place I visited. I gave the Lord's Supper at Plymouth Dock to about five hundred people, and truly God was with us. Mr. Rhodes assisted me, and is quite hearty in our cause. While I was away, my youngest son died, which greatly afflicted Mrs. Bradburn. At the same time I was laid up in Cornwall, having hurt both my feet in viewing the wonders of nature in that amazing county. The sprain brought on a touch of the gout, which cost me several days, though not one Sunday; for Timothy Crowther (a sound man) carried me on his back to chapel, and I preached sitting, in the very fit, which, I suppose, no one was ever mad enough to do before. Yet, I do not repent it, though my pain was exquisite. While I was away, your letter arrived, which accounts for your not receiving this sooner. Be assured, it was not want of love that prevented your hearing from me when at Conference; but I could send you no pleasing news, and I determined the unpleasant should find its own way, which I knew it soon would. But fear not, all will be well. Every thing is in a good way. We make no laws but what we can rescind. I was glad to get some ground to begin to build upon. Mr. Thompson was the chief opposer of the liberal plan. But I have no great doubt of throwing him again into the minority. I baptize and bury without controul: and last Sunday week I gave the Lord's Supper at Kingswood to about four hundred people, many being there from Bristol. Just as I gave the cup to a poor trembling soul, the Head of the Church justified her fully. She proclaimed his love aloud, and great was our rejoicing. That forenoon will tell well in eternity. Our Church bigots here dare not molest me, though Rodda has espoused their cause with all the art of Lucifer. I have told him my mind freely, without anger, and all is (and has been ever since the Conference) outwardly peaceable; and I hope to keep it so till it comes round again. Elliot is a staunch friend, and helps me much. I purpose to give the Lord's Supper again on Christmas day, when I hope to see more of the Bristol friends. The people are very, very kind to me. My health and spirits are charming. I have not a doubt, that, in the next Conference, a simple majority of any society will be allowed the Lord's Supper, and something more than that. Remember I tell you this day, the high-flyers among us are coming down

a-pace, and great will be their fall. I will not give my privileges away, to please a few inconsistent *ignoramuses*, though I submitted for a season to their unreasonable decrees. Mr. Moore gives the Lord's Supper every month regularly at Bath, and has a blessed work going forward. I really believe the little interruption we met with will do us good. Do not destroy your gown and bands, nor suppose they are for ever done with. You will know better soon, if the Lord will. We must have a Methodist constitution or plan of discipline explained, and we shall in due time. (I wish I durst tell you all I know and propose; but a letter may miscarry, and I am bound to secrecy. *This parenthesis to yourself most sacredly*). I will send you a hundred sermons soon; the other pamphlets are all gone. Never mind the money. Sell what you can easily, and give the rest away to any that will use them. My love to Mrs. K., Mr. Sanderson, &c. Write soon and often to, dear brother,

Your's in Christ,

S. BRADBURN.

It would seem from the latter part of Mr. Bradburn's letter, that there was a project in hand, to which he was a party, for procuring a constitutional plan of discipline for the Methodists; and from his manner of alluding to it, as well as from Mr. Bradburn's known liberal principles at that time, there can be little doubt that whatever the scheme was, its provisions were such as he believed Mr. Kilham would approve. If so, it must have had some agreement with the suggestions contained in Mr. Kilham's letter before noticed, signed "Trueman and Freeman," a copy of which Mr. Bradburn had seen, and probably knew the author, as he was then in Mr. Kilham's confidence.

As an act of justice, it is proper to remark these circumstances as we proceed, because Mr. Bradburn and several other preachers, who had coincided with Mr. Kilham, and even gone beyond him in complaining of the existing plan of Methodism, afterwards turned round and became his greatest enemies.

Very few of the leading preachers were neutral; while one class were co-operating for the purpose of procuring for the societies a greater measure of liberty, those of the high party were taking an opposite course

with the view of keeping them nominally connected with the Established Church. It would, indeed, almost appear from the intelligence contained in the annexed letter, written by Mr. Jonathan Crowther to Mr. Kilham, that, as regards certain individuals at least, there was some other—it might not, we fear, improperly be called sinister—object. Mr. Crowther asks—

“Did you hear of the famous letter sent last year by Mr. Thompson to Mr. Pitt? It seems this Solomon of ours, who made such a mighty *pothor* at the London Conference,\* about the junior preachers taking so much upon themselves, wrote, nevertheless, without the least authority, to Mr. Pitt, in the name of the Methodist Preachers, or of the body of the Methodists. I am informed the sum of his letter was, 1st. to know whether Mr. Pitt, &c., wished the Methodists to give a fuller and stronger proof of their attachment to the government than they had done. 2nd. To desire him and his colleagues to bring about a closer union between the Methodists and the Church. 3rd. To desire Mr. Pitt to aid the preachers against the rebellious trustees in London, respecting the New Chapel.† What was this but (to give the comment of a shrewd man,) to say to Mr. Pitt—Help us in the affair of the New Chapel, and the Methodists shall be anything government chooses: if desired, like Sampson they shall hew wood and draw water, for the Philistines. After he had written what he had to say, it seems he added, and *would you know Sir, who I am?*—I am one of the preachers appointed by Mr. Wesley to preach in the new chapel, and the person that was chosen the president of the first Conference after his death. Here’s for you, my friend; it seems some thing was said about this the last Conference; but Mr. Thompson being *a great man*,

\* When Mr. Kilham was tried and censured for writing the Address to the Newcastle Society.

† This refers to law proceedings then pending between the trustees of the above chapel and the Conference, respecting the power of appointing preachers to the pulpit, which the former had claimed, and for which the latter instituted a Chancery suit against them. After expending from 1,500l. to 2,000l., it was abandoned.

and *a senior brother*, no punishment was inflicted on him.

Your's &c.

J. CROWTHER.

*Waterford, 12th Jan., 1794.*

This letter, which is very curious in its character, was first published while all the parties were living and as its authenticity was not disputed, nor its contents explained, the only conclusion is, that Mr. Thompson's conduct was considered to be unjustifiable, and therefore improper. We do not see how Mr. Pitt could regard his communication in any other light than as an offer from the Methodists to promote any state purpose which he might desire, provided he would be equally obliging in return for this service. It does not appear, however, that any preacher, or other individual, was concerned with Mr. Thompson in this questionable transaction; nor are we aware that Mr. Pitt took any step indicating a wish to avail himself of the tender which was made to him by "the president of the first Conference after the death of Mr. Wesley."

About this time, a project which acquired the name of the "Bishop's Plan" was originated. This scheme was first communicated to Mr. Kilham by Mr. Thomas Taylor, who described it in a letter as follows:—

"Messrs. Mather, Pawson, Clarke, Rogers, Coke, Bradburn, Moore, and myself, met a few weeks ago at Litchfield, to see if any accommodating plan could be hit upon, previous to the meeting of the Conference. I hope our meeting was not in vain. We were unanimously of opinion, that some kind of ordination is necessary to prevent confusion; and that every preacher that is admitted, shall be admitted by being ordained deacon; and when he is permitted to celebrate the Lord's Supper, he must be ordained priest; and wherever a majority of a society desire the Lord's Supper, that they ought to have it. Our friends thought we should assemble without being known, and therefore fixed upon Litchfield, a place where no Methodists are, for that purpose. I was pretty certain we could not be hid; and, accordingly, it was known in a day or two. Mr.

Benson was not invited, and he is making a horrible stir, as though we had been consulting how to get the whole government of the Methodist Connexion into our power; and this, I suppose, he will propagate far and wide. I expect, when Thompson is informed, he will storm at no small rate: and yet the above is the substance of the meeting,—excepting that a proposal will be laid before the Conference of having a number of superintendents, who may have a kind of executive power between Conference and Conference, as it is thought the districts do not answer the end. The only reason why one preacher is to attend from Scotland at the Conference is the expense, and leaving the places destitute of preachers; and by a preacher from each circuit, meeting at Edinburgh, every thing may be easily settled, and one may do as well as twenty. Ireland is more extensive, and there are many more preachers than in Scotland; and yet, by thus meeting, one does all the business at the English Conference. You may call your meeting at Edinburgh a Conference, if you please. We are excessively straitened for money, and have need to save all we can.”

The meeting at Litchfield was reported to have been attended by a circumstance or two which Mr. Taylor does not mention, but which ought perhaps to be noticed. It will be recollected that it was held at a period of great suspicion, and when many persons were apprehended on charges of sedition. As the French Revolution had just occurred, and much political excitement was abroad in consequence, the coming together of eight strangers, and their secret deliberations, which lasted for several days, caused considerable surmisings, as to their object; and it is said, that notice was given to the magistrates and local authorities, who directed them to be watched. It was not impossible but they might even have been placed in a still more unpleasant position, had it not happened that a commercial traveller, who came to the inn, knew one or more of the preachers; and in his surprise at finding them there, he began to enquire respecting them, which occasioned their characters to transpire,—and they were allowed to depart

without being called upon to give that account of themselves which, under other circumstances, they might have been obliged to do. This meeting was soon noised abroad through the Connexion, which rendered it expedient for them to explain what they had assembled for—and possibly was one cause of Mr. Kilham knowing anything on the subject, which might otherwise have been kept secret until Conference.

Mr. Kilham, disapproving of the appointment of bishops,—for this was what was intended, though they are smoothly mentioned as superintendents to “have a kind of executive power,”—began at once to oppose it on the following grounds:—First, that no such officers were wanted in the Methodist Connexion; second, because there were few, if any, who could be found possessed of sufficient grace and humility to preserve them from abusing the vast power which must necessarily be placed in the hands of persons so situated; third, that it would occasion great and unnecessary expense, the funds to meet which, might be more usefully appropriated; fourth, because the tendency of such a plan would be, to lessen the influence and independence of the generality of the preachers, whose usefulness would be proportionably impaired; and, lastly, that it would open a door to official stateliness and formality, which might in the end corrupt and destroy that honest simplicity which had characterized Methodism from the beginning. Mr. Kilham urged these and other arguments against the appointment of bishops, with equal energy and success, and the plan was generally disapproved of by the people and preachers, though two or three of the latter, who had hitherto co-operated with him in attempting to procure the sacrament for the societies, looked with a favourable eye upon this new proposition; and, had it taken effect, they would in all probability have been amongst the first to have attained the episcopal office. It could not be carried, however, to the great mortification of several, especially Mr. Mather, who approved of this plan next to that of having an individual, as head, to succeed Mr. Wesley in the government of the community. Mr. Mather was quite restless on the subject;

and in the fear that he might at length contrive some plausible expedient for bringing it into operation,—no matter under what name or form, at first,—Mr. Kilham was led, at the request of others (particularly Mr. Jon. Edmondson,\* who, in a letter, urged him strongly on the subject, and offered to assist him,) to animadvert upon Mr. M. in very severe terms, which he was not likely either to forget or forgive; and which, perhaps, may be accounted for and excused from the consideration of Mr. Kilham being fully convinced that the plan, if adopted, would, either then or ultimately, have a most injurious effect on the Connexion; and that Mr. Mather's ingenuity and perseverance were such, that he would sooner or later accomplish his object, unless he

\* The following extract from Mr. Edmondson's letter to Mr. Kilham ought to be published, showing, as it does, that some of the most personal strictures, found in his writings, were suggested by others:—"From the first I have opposed, as far as I could, the episcopal scheme, formed by our leading men. Among other objections I had to it, the following weighed much with me:—First, it appeared unscriptural—the words bishop and presbyter being used to express the same office. Second, it was not followed in the first ages of Christianity, as Lord King and others have proved to a demonstration. Third, it is downright priestcraft. We must have some kind of external pomp and show, to keep vulgar minds in awe, is the language of the High-Priest; and what so likely to answer this end as the creation of bishops? They will be looked upon as a kind of demi-gods. Their sayings will be attended to, and their silly dogmas pass into laws, and therefore we must have bishops. Lastly, the men who formed the plan wished to govern with a rod of iron. But shall we be such fools as to put ourselves under their power? I am resolved, the moment bishops are appointed, to bid adieu to the itinerant plan, and become a local preacher. I suspect Mr. Mather of having formed the idea long before Mr. Wesley's death. What else could have induced him to get ordained—first a Deacon; secondly a Priest; and thirdly a Bishop? It is certain he has been a laborious and useful man in the work; but he has always had something of despotism in his very form and constitution. Bradburn would make as good a bishop as any of them, for he is a liberal soul; but perhaps his rising to the eminence might cramp him, and, therefore, he is better where he is. Jonathan Crowther, I am informed, is going to publish his thoughts upon the subject; and if I am not much mistaken, he will punch some of them in a tender part. I wish he may flay them till their bones are bare. I know no person so fit to whip them as he, except my friend Kilham, who, if he once began, would not only skin them, but would break all their bones. What do you say to it? If you will begin, I'll promise to stand by and render you all the service I can; at any rate, I'll pray stoutly for your success. Excuse the freedom of a friend!"



were at once struck down, and the whole scheme put out of countenance.

We shall now quote the passage referring to Mr. Mather, from a pamphlet written by Mr. Kilham, and signed "Martin Luther." It was not published until a few months later; but that portion of it may here be introduced which has connection with the Bishop's plan, and the meeting at Litchfield:—

"It is impossible to point out any foibles in useful men, without exposing one's self to censure; but the necessity of the case often sanctifies this disagreeable work. Few men have laboured harder, or been more useful in the Methodist Connexion, than Mr. Mather. God grant that he may always abound in the work of his Divine Master! While Mr. Wesley lived, he was considered as Prime Minister in our Israel, and many things which Mr. Wesley did, were laid to his account. As Mr. Mather is a Scotchman, it is natural to suppose he was educated in the Presbyterian religion, from his early days. Nothing can be more opposite, than the Church of England and the Church of Scotland. The very name of a Bishop, in the latter, is grating in the ears of the people. He was very friendly in helping the Methodists in his own nation, to all the privileges they enjoy. What strange turn his mind took, when he suffered himself to be created a sham Episcopal Methodistical Bishop, is beyond the comprehension of many. This good man, after he had travelled upwards of thirty years, and been very useful in our Connexion, was all at once thrown into a strange chaos. Gospel light—christian experience—presbyterian principles—and high-church notions, like the four elements, were jumbled into one mass; and it took Mr. Wesley and his helpers three days to create from this chaos the following persons:—1. Mr. Mather a Deacon. If I am informed right, the business began at five in the morning, and before night, an old travelling preacher was metamorphosed into a Deacon. The office of Deacon is described in the sixth of the Acts,—to receive the collections for the poor—provide for them—serve tables—visit and pray with the sick—and occasionally preach.

glorious employment, for a man that had run to and fro through the nations, for so many years!—The scriptures say, ‘He that humbleth himself, shall be exalted!’

2. On the second day, Mr. Mather was made a Priest. As none of the ministers of Christ in the New Testament are distinguished by this name, we must have recourse to the Old Testament—read the book of Leviticus. The priest’s office was to kill sheep—slay oxen—burn the fat of lambs—offer the ashes of a heifer—inspect an old leprous wall, &c., &c. Here we find our worthy friend sent back to the school of the law, and to the covenant of works. But hear him quoting what St. Paul says on this subject: 1. Cor. ix. 20.: ‘And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews.’ Where is the christian minister that would not be circumcised to save that people? I dare say Mr. Mather would, if he were as old as Abraham.—This was a noble day’s work!

3. On the third day, Mr. Mather was made a sham Episcopal Methodistical Bishop. It was not with an intention to take care of a congregation, or feed the flock of Christ with the sacraments, &c., that he was made a bishop, but to be in readiness to set apart others to these offices, provided the people should become a separate body. He, and another preacher, (whose name I shall not mention, as he took no part in the late disputes,) were made bishops, as a ‘corps de reserve;’ and were to hold themselves in readiness to come from their obscurity, if they should see it necessary.—Read over, in Mr. Wesley’s prayer book, the solemn promises Mr. Mather made upon his knees before God, and enquire whether he has attempted to fulfil them or not. To trifle with such sacred engagements, is what many could not think of, without horror. God loves truth in the inward parts; and when we promise upon our knees to engage in ‘duly administering the sacraments,’ &c., and never attempt to execute our solemn engagements, what can we expect from a ‘God that is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity?’

“After Mr. Wesley’s death, it was supposed by many that he wished, either alone, or with a helper, to take

the reins of government, and be a king in our Israel. To prevent this evil, several preachers met at Halifax, and laid the foundation of our present excellent constitution. But did not Mr. Mather show evident signs of discontent and mortification, when he found how the business was to be settled, and saw another fill the president's chair? From the Manchester Conference to the Litchfield meeting, did he not oppose the liberties of our dissenting brethren, and wish to bind them to the Church for ever? Do you ask, what made him attend the convention at Litchfield? Probably to help in dividing the kingdom into dioceses, and 'to cast in his mind,' which would suit him best. It is confidently asserted, that had they continued another day in their convention, the magistrates would have taken them up, and seized their papers. It seems, then, their reverences escaped by the skin of their teeth!"

This passage certainly presses hard upon Mr. Mather, —some will say too hard, in which opinion, considering his age and usefulness, we should freely concur, did we not keep in mind, that, for a long period, even prior to the death of Mr. Wesley, he had shown a desire for power to which there seemed to be no limit; and that, while the measures which he sanctioned, or promoted, tended, in many respects, to gratify this passion, it was admitted that part of them were of very doubtful utility to the cause of religion. Several of the preachers saw and felt this, and feared the consequences; but as his influence in the body was great, the generality dared not to speak out or oppose his proceedings. Mr. Kilham understood the case; and, moreover, he knew that, to make an impression, and frustrate his purposes, which was what he determined to do, he must set aside reserve, and bring every species of artillery which he could muster, to bear upon him. This, too, was evidently Mr. Edmondson's opinion, which he illustrates by very intelligible figures of speech in the letter from which an extract is inserted in a previous note.

The original intention of those who were friendly to the Bishop's plan, was to have it introduced for consideration at the approaching Conference; but it had

been so ill received by the Connexion, that nothing was said pointedly on the subject when the preachers met: though in private conversations, its merits were warily canvassed, for the purpose of ascertaining how particular individuals stood affected towards it. The opinion of its advocates, however, was, that it had better be allowed to stand over for a year, without any discussion being then sought for on the subject.

The Conference assembled at Bristol in July, 1794; and Mr. Kilham having been appointed at the Aberdeen district meeting to attend in behalf of Scotland—which had the privilege of sending only one member—he had previously to go to London, where a committee or delegation of preachers met to draw up a rough sketch of the stations, and transact other business preparatory to the general Conference. On reaching London, he found, assembled from different circuits, a convention of trustees of the High Church party, who had formed a project for preventing the Methodists seceding from the Establishment, or having the Sacrament administered in their own chapels. Their design\* was to bring on a separation between the liberal preachers and those who were for the Church, and, if possible, to prevail on a majority of the ‘hundred’, whose names were in Mr. Wesley’s Poll Deed, to declare for the latter, and then to proclaim themselves to be the legal Conference,—and so to assert their right to the pulpits of the chapels throughout the Connexion. If this scheme had succeeded, all, both members and preachers, who would not have agreed to strict terms of union corresponding with the views of the anti-liberal party, must have been cut off from the body. The expedient could not, however, be carried into effect; but when it is remembered, that such a project was entertained by a large number of trustees, we cannot be surprised at the jealousies and contentions which subsequently prevailed.

In a letter to Mr. Brackenbury, Mr. Kilham details

\* Mr. Kilham states, in a letter to a friend, that he had his information from Dr. Whitehead, Mr. Wesley’s biographer, who obtained it from some of the trustees that met in London.

several matters relating both to his journey from Scotland and to the Conference, which it may be proper to introduce here:—

“In my journey to Bristol, I stopped a few days in Newcastle, and a few more with my dear wife’s relations and friends in Yorkshire. The revival in the latter place was going on gloriously; and in York and all that neighbourhood, many were flocking to the Lord Jesus. I spent three or four nights in Epworth, with my aged father and brethren. The work of God has been dull in those parts for several years. The society and congregation were remarkably reduced, and every thing looked like winter among them. I found a degree of satisfaction in preaching several times, and they came to hear with very great cheerfulness. Since that time, they have had a change of preachers, and the work is a good deal revived. My aged father has known the grace of God, in truth, upwards of 60 years. He is very much altered, but holds fast his confidence, and appears ripening for eternity. Being threatened with a complaint which is likely to remove him very suddenly, he is apprehensive that the time of his departure is at hand. When I took my leave of him, it was a very solemn time. He clasped me in his arms, and wept over me, declaring he should see my face no more on this side of the grave. We all wept, and parted in the spirit of prayer, hoping to meet at last in the kingdom of glory. I spent five days in London, and was there at the time the convention of trustees met, to alter our plan. I learned from one of their friends the nature and design of their meeting together, which very much grieved my mind. But I prayed and hoped that God would frustrate their intentions. In the meeting of delegates, we had many things talked over, and matters were conducted with great peace and sincere affection, and we got through the rough draft of the stations sooner than was expected.”

After travelling from London to Bristol, Mr. Kilham proceeds to say,—

“The Conference was going on delightfully, when the trustees from various parts desired liberty to bring

in a paper [requiring, in substance, that the old plan should be strictly adhered to, the sacrament in the chapels prohibited, &c.] from the convention of trustees that had lately assembled in London. They were admitted into the Conference, and read their proposals to the preachers, and left them to be considered by us. This was the beginning of our sorrows. Several warm debates took place on the subject, and the Conference broke up in great confusion that night. I went to my lodgings near Portland chapel with a very heavy heart, and spent a good deal of time in prayer, resolving to give myself up to God, and follow his will as far as I could learn it from his word. The matter appeared so very clear to me, that I wondered how any preacher could doubt what to do. If we took the word of God for our rule, we were safe; but if we followed the counsel of men, and leaned to worldly prudence, I saw the spirit of God would be grieved, and we should act contrary to the truth. While I was in this state, I wrote a sheet of post paper on every side, with my thoughts on the subject, in an address to the Conference."

The address spoken of, which was of a liberal character, and advocated the concession of the Lord's Supper to those societies in which it was requested, after having been read, was opposed by Mr. Mather\* and others, who objected to its being taken into consideration, and at length they so far prevailed with Conference as to obtain a vote for its being destroyed.

A number of petitions were sent to the Conference, as usual, from the societies, for the sacrament; and several were also presented from trustees against it. A deputation of trustees belonging to Bristol, likewise waited on Conference, with an address containing complaints against some of the preachers, who had advocated the administration of the Lord's Supper among the Methodists; and as Mr. Moore, who was put down for

\* In a letter to Mr. J. Edmondson, Mr. Kilham says,—“Mr. Mather told me the next day, in an apology he made for his conduct, that he believed the address was true, and its sentiments just, but for political reasons he saw it necessary to set his foot upon it.”

that circuit, had acted a liberal part, it was requested he might be changed, and another appointed in his place. For the better understanding of what follows, it is necessary to remark, there were three chapels in Bristol at that time, viz., Portland Street, Guinea Street, and Broadmead: the trustees of the two latter were for the old plan of going to Church for the sacrament; but at Portland Street, it was wished for that ordinance to be given to the society. Now, if they could have agreed to have left each other to the guidance of their own consciences, no particular difficulty would have been felt; but unfortunately, in Bristol, as in Newcastle and other places, those who stood up for receiving the sacrament at the Church, could not be content to do so themselves, and leave others who differed from them to partake of it in that way which they most approved; but they must insist also on their brethren doing exactly as they did. This was the hardship under which a portion of the Methodists laboured, and of which they justly complained as an infringement on that liberty which they had a right to enjoy; they did not wish to interfere with those who thought proper to go to Church, nor with those preachers who objected to administer the sacrament;—but when their consciences led them to believe they ought to have it in their own chapels, and they had a preacher who was willing to administer it—they considered it unreasonable, as well as unscriptural, for others who had different views, and who were free themselves to act accordingly, to interfere with them, and say—You shall either take the sacrament where we do, or not at all. This was the case at Bristol; and the High Church trustees of Guinea Street and Broadmead, being determined to prevent the ordinance of the Lord's Supper from being introduced amongst any of the Methodists, when they saw that it was likely to be granted to the Portland Street society; they requested that chapel might be transferred to the Bath Circuit, in order to avoid having any connection with either it or the people. The Conference, however, did not think it expedient to effect this change, but that the administration of the sacrament might be as

little offensive as possible to the party who had opposed its introduction among the Methodists, Mr. Vasey, then a circuit preacher, but who had been ordained in America, and afterwards served a curacy in the Established Church in England, and who was consequently a regular clergyman, was appointed to administer the ordinance in Portland Street chapel. Mr. Moore had also leave granted to assist Mr. Vasey in giving the Lord's Supper, but the trustees did not know of this at the time they acquiesced in the compromise.

It should have been observed, that the Bristol Conference relaxed, in some degree, the rule respecting the sacrament which had existed the previous year; and, instead of requiring complete unanimity, it was agreed "that the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in future, where the union and concord of the society can be preserved without it." If this did not realize Mr. Bradburn's expectation, who, in his letter to Mr. Kilham, said he hoped a simple majority of the society would be empowered to determine the matter, still the alteration was much in favour of liberty.

On the first Sunday after Conference, Dr. Coke, who had not yet departed from Bristol, administered the sacrament at Portland Street chapel—and was assisted by Mr. Moore, which the trustees of Guinea Street and Broadmead being informed of, their solicitor was instructed to write a letter to Mr. Moore on the following day, prohibiting him from preaching in either of those places; and soon after, the trustees of Portland Street retaliated upon Mr. Benson, another preacher who had identified himself with the Church party, by forbidding him to enter the pulpit of that chapel. A division in the Bristol society then took place, when about 300 members left, headed by Mr. Benson, Mr. Rodda, and Mr. Vasey, and the trustees of the two chapels before mentioned. These occurrences soon becoming known throughout the Connexion, produced a commotion in the body greater than had existed at any previous period, and were the occasion of more than fifty pamphlets and circulars being printed; and meetings without number were held for the purpose of



supporting or condemning the conduct of the trustees, according to the views taken by parties by the administration of the sacrament. In the controversy which was carried on, the preachers who assisted the High Church trustees of Broadmead and Guinea Street, were principally Messrs. Benson, Rodda, Vasey, Mather, and Thompson. Those on the opposite side, were Dr. Coke, and Messrs. Bradburn, Pawson, Moore, Crowther, and Kilham. After the dispute had reached its height, a special district meeting was held, and resolutions, expressed in strong terms of condemnation, were entered into against the conduct of Mr. Benson, the other preachers who had acted in conjunction with him in the Bristol affair, and the trustees. Two new chapels were also commenced building in the room of the two from which Mr. Moore had been excluded. On the other hand, a correspondence was opened with nearly all the trustees in the kingdom, to request their co-operation with the Bristol plan, and Mr. Benson wrote individually to "the hundred" preachers, to ascertain if a majority were on his side, with a view, no doubt, of prevailing on them to act in his behalf under the Deed of Declaration. It was also proposed to hold an extraordinary Conference immediately on the subject, but many of the preachers objected, and on further consideration it was abandoned: as the Poll Deed only authorised one yearly meeting, which would have rendered the acts of any intermediate Conference void; the assembling therefore would have been useless, as well as expensive.

The Bristol controversy, about which so much was written and said at the time, involved this question:—In cases where societies wished to have the sacrament, (as, indeed, any other privilege which the preachers were willing to grant,) had the trustees the power to hinder its bestowal?—The affirmative being maintained by the trustees in question, who contended they had authority to prevent any alteration being made in the plan as left by Mr. Wesley, the struggle was against this assumed prerogative. Those preachers who held High Church principles, such as Mr. Mather and Mr. Benson,

supported the trustees in making this claim, and for the moment appeared as if they could be content for them to exercise a kind of absolute sovereignty in the Connexion; while those who advocated the sacrament being given to the societies, resisted the trustee-power, and called upon the body at large to aid them in opposing the attempted encroachment upon their christian privileges. It is curious to contrast the language used during this conflict by several of the preachers on the liberal side, in reference to the rights of the people, with their conduct afterwards, when the ascendancy of the trustees had ceased to be a subject of apprehension. Mr. Pawson, for example, published a pamphlet, dated Jan. 20, 1795, containing the following passages, with others equally strong. Addressing the people, he says,—

“You have not only built our chapels, but you bear every burden of a temporal kind. Why, then, should you be excluded from having a proper share in the government, or at least in the regulation of the Church of God? Can a few trustees be your representatives? Are your consciences to be wholly subject to their will? Do you not know, that, as to many of them, their judgment stands directly opposed to your’s? Can even the preachers be your representatives, so as to decide absolutely for you in things not enjoined of God? They are your servants for Christ’s sake, and I trust a very great majority are willing to comply with your wishes, and to serve you in every thing which tends to the glory of God, and your soul’s salvation. But others of them differ in judgment from you; therefore you must maintain your freedom, and assert your right to every ordinance of God.”

“At any rate, brethren, keep your liberty. If you think it not safe to trust the Conference with your spiritual privileges, then, in the name of the Lord, I intreat you to keep them in your own power, and insist upon it, whenever it shall so happen that any considerable number of your society shall wish either to have preaching in Church hours, or the sacrament in your own chapels, that your assistant shall call the trustees,

leaders, stewards, and local preachers in that circuit together, and these shall take the matter into serious consideration. And if it shall appear to a majority of them, that it would be most for the glory of God, either to have the one or the other, or both, then in God's name let it be so. Or if this method do not meet with your approbation, then let your whole society assemble together, and consider the matter as in the presence of God; and if it shall be found agreeable to the majority that you shall have the above privileges, let it be done accordingly. And let this christian and brotherly method be always taken, in order to make known your mind to the Conference. Remember, O ye Methodists! that the reign of popery is past and gone; let it never be restored to you under any shape or name. In the name of him who bought you with his blood, maintain the rights and liberties of your own consciences."

It is exceedingly probable, that, while apprehensive of being brought under the controul of trustees, there was, on the part of several of the leading preachers who afterwards resisted all overtures of that kind, a serious intention of dividing the power with the people. Mr. Pawson must have been prepared for some such result, when he wrote the pamphlet from which we have just quoted. Dr. Coke, too, in a letter to Mr. Kilham, which was sent with some propositions for an arrangement with the Bristol trustees, and for securing peace to the societies, had evidently an impression that justice required certain changes to be made, which would admit the laity to a participation of the power previously enjoyed by the preachers—though it would seem the Doctor was for surrendering as little as possible. The following is an extract from his letter:—

"In respect to the 2nd article,—religious liberty requires that the people or their representatives should have some negative in respect to their ministers. Hitherto, we have been, since the death of Mr. Wesley, the most perfect aristocracy, perhaps, existing on the face of the earth. The people have had *no* power: we, the *whole*, in the fullest sense that can be conceived.

If there be a change in favour of religious liberty, the people certainly should have some power. Less than what is offered them in this article, it appears to me they cannot have. And, indeed, what preacher would wish, or at least ought to wish, to labour in a circuit, where the majority of the trustees, leaders, and stewards disapproved of him? The little power given in this instance to the trustees, is, I think, no more than they have a claim to; as we cannot do without men who will be responsible for our debts, and we are very much obliged to them for becoming responsible: and their votes, when united to the stewards and leaders of the whole circuit, become (of consequence) of small weight in so numerous an assembly."

The various discussions which were promoted in consequence of these misunderstandings, though in many respects to be regretted, had, however, the effect of calling attention generally to the constitution of Methodism; and it was admitted by almost every one, that some further regulations, and a better arrangement of the system, were required, to secure its peace and permanent prosperity.

Mr. Kilham had no sooner returned to Aberdeen, than he was made acquainted with the disputes which had arisen out of the Bristol case; and being so immediately connected with the rights of conscience, they soon engaged his attention, as well as that of other preachers at a distance from the place where the contest originated. He wrote a small pamphlet in November, and signed it "Aquila and Priscilla," detailing the particulars of the difference which had occurred, the principles involved therein, and the conduct proper to be adopted under existing circumstances: this piece was pronounced by many to be the best and clearest statement that had been written on the subject.

In sending forth this publication, while Mr. Kilham, as appears from his private diary, piously wished it might be useful, he had his fears, in connection with past experience, that, so far as regarded himself, the effect might be unpleasant. Under this impression, he prayed as follows:—"Pity, O Lord! the distracted state of our Connexion; break the influence of those

that would lord it over the consciences of others, and let the present struggle end in our people having liberty to worship Thee according to the direction of Thy word. Thou hast blessed my former attempts in this cause—bless the letter I have written, and make it answer the end intended: let it be read without prejudice—let it appear that Thou standest by to defend the truth, and all glory shall be ascribed to Thee. I am content to suffer insult and abuse, as I have formerly done,—only let popish arts be banished from our Connexion, and I am willing to bear the consequences. Do Thou disappoint the expectations of those who would oppress us; and let their system be broken as far as it is opposed to Thy will.”

While Mr. Kilham was so much engaged in promoting the cause of liberty amongst the societies generally, he was not negligent of those more immediate duties which belonged to his office as a Methodist preacher; and these he performed with a zeal and diligence which were equalled by few, and which gained him approbation in the circuits where he laboured. As a proof of this it may be stated, that during the last winter he was in Scotland, which was more severe than the oldest inhabitant could remember, when his horse could not travel on account of the depth of the snow—instead of making this an excuse for staying at home, and leaving the country parts until the season was more favourable—he travelled the circuit on foot as well as he could, and almost at the hazard of losing his life, rather than the places should be without their regular supply of preaching. It is under such circumstances as these that a minister’s energy of character, and his regard for the spiritual welfare of souls, are put to the test; and when thus tried, Mr. Kilham was never found to be deficient.

If Mr. Kilham’s general temper and disposition were to be judged of by the severity of some parts of his controversial writings, he would be much wronged. His love of liberty, the sternness of his moral principles, and the indignation which filled his mind when he saw any conduct which he deemed inconsistent in

christians, more especially christian ministers, or incompatible with the golden rule, which requires the reciprocal rights of men to be respected, sometimes made him lash the offenders with an almost unsparing hand; yet his nature was replete with kindness, and those who knew him intimately—even if they differed from him in opinion—had a great respect for him on account of his piety, and the sterling worth of his character. Apart from the excellent remarks which it contains, the following letter to his brother Simon, on the death of his wife, ought to be given, to shew the affection which Mr. Kilham bore to his relatives, and his sympathising spirit towards them when under affliction :—

*Aberdeen, 18th February, 1795.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

Last night, about 10 o'clock, we received my father's letter, in which we had the melancholy account of the death of your dear partner. You may be sure we felt very keenly for you; and poured out our souls to God for blessing upon you and the dear children she has left behind. Our fervent and constant addresses to the throne of grace shall be continued in your behalf; and may the God who hears the cry of the needy, grant you such supplies of spiritual blessings and temporal mercies, that you may rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Several circumstances led me to suppose when I saw her, that she would not be long an inhabitant of this world. She appeared much more spiritual than I had formerly seen her; and was conscious of her approaching dissolution. When I spoke to her about eternal things, she told me, with tears, that she was soon to quit this mournful vale, and seemed assured that I should see her no more in this life. Her children lay near her heart, but she appeared to have power to give up all to him who died for her and rose again. I have no doubt but since that time, her happy spirit has been ripening for eternity; and she would endeavour to set her house in order, that when her Lord called she might have nothing to do but to rest in his kingdom. The very prospect of a future state would animate her soul to seek to be found in Christ without spot and blameless; and as her departure was not sudden, she would have opportunity to trim her lamp, and make ready to meet her glorious bridegroom.

This would reconcile her to every thing she met with in the valley of the shadow of death.

Dr. Heath, in a funeral sermon he preached, observes, there is something very awful in sudden death, provided we are prepared for it. If we could have our choice to leave the world in a gentle, easy manner, it would be much more agreeable, than going in a moment from a state of health to the right hand of God. This opinion has been adopted by many. There is something so reasonable in it, and at the same time so consonant to our feelings, that such a death seems most desirable. But as our life is in the hand of God, it is our duty to leave every thing to him. If he should call us in a moment to appear at his bar, if we are only found meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, we shall die happy and be for ever with the Lord.

Mr. Whitfield prayed for a sudden death, and was heard in that which he requested. But he was such an holy, exemplary follower of the Lord Jesus, that death could hardly at any time find him unprepared for glory, after his conversion to God. And the very nature of his disorder, often induced him to expect that his death would be sudden as well as glorious. Very few persons are of his mind in this matter. I apprehend, we should be careful to have a meetness wrought in our souls, that whether the Lord come suddenly, or give us intimation of his approach, we may be ready to join the blessed spirits around his throne, and be happy for ever.

You, my dear brother, have many things that should bear up your spirit in this trying dispensation. The Lord suffered you to live many years together, enjoying many temporal advantages in the midst of little difficulties. 1. You have found the Lord your God to bless you in your basket and in your store in your going out, and in your coming in. 2. God Almighty called you both at the same time to seek his face; you started together in the race set before you. Since that time (though you may have many things to humble you before the Lord Jesus) you have gone together to the house of God; you have taken sweet counsel together in the way of life and peace; and mingled your prayers before the throne of grace for blessings on yourselves, and on all that have been united with you. 3. Both your relatives have been a blessing to you in different respects. You have received many mercies from those that were near to her; and she has been blessed by being united to our

family. 4. By the blessing of God upon your mutual endeavours, you have increased considerably in the things of this life, since you came together. 5. God has given you several lovely children, which are likely to be a comfort to you in your widowhood. 6. You were suitably warned of the approaching dissolution of your dear partner. You had time to prepare for the solemn event. This would not hinder you from wishing the continuance of her life, with submission to the will of your heavenly Father ; but you would see the inefficacy of your prayers, and be constrained to prepare for what has happened. This great privilege would induce you to make a freewill offering of *your own flesh and blood* to the Lord, that he might grant her full salvation. 7. Her happy death cannot fail to lead you, in your distress, to justify the conduct of the Lord our God. She has done with this present evil world—her soul has been conveyed by angels into Abraham's bosom—she is become an inhabitant of Paradise—she retires from all her labours and exercises to that glorious place where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest—she will be led to living fountains of water, and God will wipe away all tears from her eyes for ever. You may be sure she has not a desire to be again involved in the cares of this life, but rejoices in the happy change that has taken place. Perhaps she has found several of her own relations, and our dear mother, and they are joyfully declaring to each other what miracles of mercy the Lord has wrought out for them. May we prepare to follow after, that whenever the Lord shall call, we may mount up to join them in singing the praise of redeeming love for ever and ever. 8. Though you are left with several children, you have many things to comfort you in this respect. You have plenty to supply their little wants ; yet how many families are left destitute of every thing but poverty and wretchedness since the commencement of the war. But you have every thing that could make your little ones comfortable and happy. Besides, you have kind friends, who will either take your children beneath the shadow of their wing, or will endeavour to help you to bear up beneath the weight of your troubles.

Now, put these things together, and see if there be not every reason in the world for you to say,—"It is the Lord, let him do as seemeth him good." While you sorrow according to the nature of your loss, let hope bear up your spirit, and induce you to follow the Lord Jesus faithfully, in the



regeneration. Not to feel in such a state would be stoicism, which is a disgrace to religion ; but to give up yourself to excessive distress, would be equally contrary to the will of God. Let the Lord be your refuge, and he will put underneath you the everlasting arms of his mercy. He will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able to bear ; but will, with the temptation, make a way for your escape.

My dear wife truly sympathises with you, and joins me in love to our father, yourself, brothers and sisters.

God bless you, and keep you for ever,

Your's affectionately,

A. KILHAM.

Early in 1795, Mr. Kilham printed a circular, addressed to the preachers, signed "Martin Luther," which attracted more attention than any thing which he had previously published. This epistle, which occupied seven quarto pages, was written at the suggestion of some of his brethren, who, in their letters, had expressed a wish that he would undertake to expose and counteract a plan of ordination, then in favour with several of the leading men, which would class the Methodist preachers into bishops, priests, and deacons, in imitation of the clerical orders in the Church of England. Having already made an extract from this piece, of what applied personally to Mr. Mather, it will only be necessary to state further, that Mr. Kilham's object was, to advocate a simple primitive kind of dedication to the office of the ministry, not pompously performed, but in a manner comporting with the responsibility of the parties, and the solemn duties they would have to perform for the souls of men. For this purpose, "Martin Luther" gives a summary of Lord Chancellor King's Treatise on the Constitution of the Church during the first three centuries; he then sketches the Methodist plan, and compares its institutions with the synods, councils, &c., of the primitive church ; and, finally, he shows, that, with a few alterations, which would admit of the lay members co-operating more fully with the ministry, the system had no need of such "bishops" as were proposed to be appointed ; but, with its present ministers, it was capable of fulfilling all the purposes

required in the scriptures. The appropriation of the signature of the great German reformer was quite in keeping with the contents of this letter;—the style of “Martin Luther” being bold and uncompromising in the highest degree; showing, as was observed by several of Mr. Kilham’s brethren, who expressed their approbation of his performance, the writer to be fearlessly resolved to maintain the truth, at whatever cost, or whoever might be opposed thereunto. The annexed information is from Mr. Kilham’s memorandum, made shortly after “Martin Luther” had been sent to the preachers throughout the Connexion:—

“By several letters from different friends, I am informed Mr. Mather is expected to be very severe on me at the next Conference. If he and his coadjutors resolve to bring me to an account, I trust I shall not be destitute of that help from God, that I have found on other occasions; I hope God will open the eyes of all our societies to see and claim their privileges, and not suffer any attempts to deprive them of these to prosper. May he break in pieces all undue influence, and cause his spiritual blessings to rest upon us; and may he baffle the schemes of those that would hinder the people from having liberty of conscience, that his work may prosper in all our societies. I had also a comfortable letter from Mr. Thomas Taylor, who approves of my circulars, and still seems determined to promote the glory of God,—he has been bold and courageous in defending the liberties of the people. The same day brought me an agreeable letter from Mr. Bradburn; he too appears determined to stand by the truth. There are several remarks in his letter on civil and religious liberty, breathing a good and generous spirit, and shewing that he is still for promoting the interests of the people, who are struggling for liberty. I have, however, received a letter from Mr. Smith, of Newcastle, who informs me, that, notwithstanding Mr. Bradburn’s pretences, he is turned to the other side. Should this be so, he will not draw his friends with him: most of whom will condemn his conduct, however they may be pleased with his abilities.”

The letter from Mr. Bradburn, just mentioned, is before us, and it is proper to insert a passage or two on the subject alluded to, with Mr. Kilham's answer :

*Frome, April 11, 1795.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

\* \* \* \*

I think with you that the schemes of the Trustee party will be frustrated. The people in our societies will vindicate their rights, and convince their would-be-masters of their error. Indeed, I am so sure that religious liberty will soon become universal, that I have no fears on this occasion. I rather feel disposed to break the fall of honest bigots, and let them down as gently as possible. \* \* \*

I am quite diverted with your caricatures of the gentlemen you bring forward in your letter; and though you are a sad fellow, yet, I hope when you come upon the mercy of your peers, you will have a good deliverance. My being here, prevented your receiving my answer in time for your district meeting. I wonder why you have it so soon; however, as I have nothing new to offer, it wont signify.

We have a negociation on the carpet; but how it will turn out, I know not. We must not divide—a division would be horrible! When we meet, please God, I will tell you many things about our affairs in this quarter, which will make you stare. Fear not my firmness to the side I have espoused, and endeavoured to help forward. I am at work, but my agents are at Manchester, &c. I find this the most likely method to gain my point. I will do all I can, consistent with our keeping together, to have religious liberty; but I will, for the present, give up a good deal, rather than divide the body. We have really nothing to fear; the people are the radix of all power in our connexion, and they are not to be trifled with any longer. All in Bristol is in *statu quo*. I have reasons for keeping away from there till our district meeting, which will be on the 26th of May.

I am, as ever, your's affectionately,

S. BRADBURN.

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*Aberdeen, 9th May, 1795.*

MY VERY DEAR SIR,

Your last letter was kindly and thankfully received. Every thing that comes from your pen, is to me like the

shadow of a great rock in a weary land. I hope our Connexion will not be divided.

The work of your agents at Manchester came to hand, when we met our district last month. We thought at the time, it was too much for any of them to accomplish. It will be attended with infinite advantage to our cause. The texts of Scripture, as mottos, are yours; and every thing that is material in the letters. \* \* \* \*

I stop the press to insert a passage which I have received in a letter from England; but I am determined not to believe it, unless it be afterwards supported by incontestible evidence. "Have you heard of Mr. Bradburn's changing sides, and going over to the other party? This will strengthen their interests much, but no power can stand against Omnipotence. The Lord will laugh them to scorn. God will have them in derision." If God has forsaken you, and suffered the devil to lead you captive at his will, then this might be true. But your last to me speaks a different language. I apprehend some rider, which you describe in your sermon on "Ministers being the Messengers of Churches," has been at the place where my friend wrote from, emptying his store of slander, to prevent our confidence in you. It is impossible that our general should fly till they have subdued him. If in any unguarded hour a temptation of this nature should have presented itself, you would have spurned it in the name of the Lord.

I apprehend you have not been so warm as some democrat wished you to be, and this has opened his mouth to revile and persecute you: should the wicked have laid a snare, and even entangled you a few moments, you would soon burst your cords, and rise superior to their power. \* \*

Though I have named the report, and made a few observations upon it, I still hope better things of you; and should think it very wicked to believe any thing that would in the least injure your worthy character. You will pardon the liberty I have taken, and if you have time, give me a few lines before I set out for the Conference.

I am appointed delegate to help in drawing up the rough plan of stationing, and hope to see you in that meeting, and be edified as usual with your heavenly remarks.

Peace and blessings attend you for ever!

I am, your affectionate servant,

ALEXR. KILHAM.

There is no record of Mr. Bradburn having made any reply to this letter; and it is probable the correspondence between him and Mr. Kilham here terminated; which will not be surprising, when it is added, that the report of his having changed sides was soon confirmed by his subsequent conduct; and a few months later, Mr. Grant, who was stationed at Bath with Mr. Bradburn, in a letter to Mr. Kilham, has the following passage respecting him:—"My bishop (Bradburn) is your mortal enemy. He exclaims against you and your books; but I tell the people to read and judge for themselves."

The first question which naturally arises in the mind, in regard to the conduct of Mr. Bradburn, who, after having said so much in favour of liberty, and in approval of Mr. Kilham's principles, had now turned round against him, is,—What could be the cause of so complete a change? An answer will partly be obtained from a communication made in a letter from Mr. Jon. Crowther to Mr. Kilham, stating, that the leading preachers, by taking different sides on the Bristol case, and in other matters, had found, that instead of being likely to accomplish their respective objects, they had only been the means of weakening each other's influence over the Connexion; and that, if they did not come to some agreement amongst themselves, by accommodating each other, the consequence would be that they would lose a great portion of their power. Mr. Mather, with his usual sagacity, first discovered this, and was disposed to apply a remedy, which Mr. Crowther thus describes:—"Mather, after having found his weakness at the Manchester district meeting, has adopted another plan. He has drawn up a very mild, pious, plaintive letter, addressed to both parties in Bristol, telling them how much he loves them all; what a sad thing it will be if they continue asunder, and if the Connexion be divided by them; and desiring them to have a day of fasting and prayer—to appoint a number of persons of each party to negotiate a reconciliation, &c. And he has got Mr. Pawson to sign it along with him."

This proposal, originating professedly in the purest

affection, and having peace and concord for its ostensible objects, was, at least in part, successful. Several meetings took place, in consequence, between the preachers who had ranged themselves on opposite sides in the Bristol affair, when each party was greatly softened down by the interviews which they had with each other; and at the ensuing Conference, the plan of accommodation assumed the form of "Articles of Pacification" which were then adopted. From this time, Mr. Kilham not only ceased to have the assistance of several of the leading men, who had previously acted with him, in endeavouring to effect certain alterations in the Connexion favourable to the liberty of the societies, but they threw the weight of their influence into the other scale, and became, to all intents and purposes, identified with Mr. Mather and his party—leaving Mr. Kilham, so far as regarded the preachers, to maintain the conflict almost single-handed. The generality of readers will be ready at once to ascribe this defection, on the part of Mr. Bradburn and others, to instability, or the want of principle; but, on a full investigation of the circumstances which governed their conduct, we feel inclined to furnish another solution to this problem, which we shall proceed to give as briefly as possible.

It must be kept in remembrance, that, at the death of Mr. Wesley, there were, if we may so express it, four different interests connected with Methodism;—1st. the Established Church, to which the cause was an auxiliary; 2nd. the preachers; 3rd. the trustees; and 4th. the members of society generally. As to the position of each class, in regard to authority, the people were not recognised as having any power—the trustees had influence in respect of chapels—the preachers sat alone in Conference, made laws, and governed the societies—and the Church of England was looked up to for the administration of the sacrament.

Let us now advert to the first subject of contention which occurred after Mr. Wesley's decease, viz., the sacrament, which the liberal party maintained ought to be received by the Methodists in their own chapels, and at the hands of their own preachers. In advocating

this change, Mr. Kilham's object was to add to the privileges of the societies—whereas, as it afterwards appeared, others, who co-operated with him, chiefly intended thereby, in opposition to the clergy, to assert the qualification of the Methodist preachers to administer the sacrament, as well as to preach the gospel; and by that means they, in fact, endeavoured to extend their own authority. Hence we see these preachers labouring with Mr. Kilham in the same cause, but for reasons very different from his. The privilege of the members constituted the actuating principle in his mind, but with others this was an accidental circumstance, while their paramount motive was to magnify their own office. Religious liberty were the common watchwords; but, when used by Mr. Kilham, they meant that enfranchisement to which the members of all churches are entitled; while, in the minds of some of his fellow-labourers, they merely signified that the Methodist preachers had as good a right to administer the Lord's Supper as any other class of ministers, the clergymen of the Established Church not excepted.

The next controversy in the Connexion arose out of the conduct of the trustees at Bristol, who had taken upon themselves to exclude a preacher from two chapels, because he had assisted in the administration of the sacrament, contrary to their wishes. By this act, they stood alike in opposition to Conference, which had granted leave for the Lord's Supper to be administered by Mr. Moore, and to the people, whom they endeavoured to deprive of an important ordinance. Mr. Kilham wrote against these trustees, because they had encroached upon the christian liberty of the members. Dr. Coke, and Messrs. Bradburn, Pawson, Taylor, &c., agreed with Mr. Kilham, and commended him in the highest degree for what he did on this occasion; but on their part it was through fear that the trustees' authority, if unchecked, would compete with their own, and perhaps obtain the ascendancy. In this dispute, the people were earnestly called upon by Mr. Pawson to come forward to resist tyranny, and maintain their liberties against the trustees; and, as

before stated, in the words of Dr. Coke and other preachers, it was admitted, during the panic which the trustees had occasioned, that the societies ought to have greater power in the Connexion than they had hitherto possessed. But when an arrangement with the trustees was proposed, and all apprehension from them had ceased, nothing more was said respecting the claims of the societies; and most of those preachers, who had been crying up the rights of the people, when they wanted their aid to build new chapels, and otherwise to resist the Bristol trustees, became silent, and they wished all discussion on the subject to be put an end to. Now it seems to be rational to conclude, from the foregoing facts, that many of the preachers who had used the name of liberty, and who had ostensibly connected themselves with the cause of reform, had, during the whole struggle, only sought to be invested with official authority to administer the sacrament, or to put down the trustees who had rebelled against Conference; and, as soon as these objects were accomplished, their work was done. But Mr. Kilham had throughout engaged in a more extensive and patriotic undertaking, which was, to place the laity in the Connexion on a similar footing with the members of all other Protestant churches, by obtaining for them a participation in the making and executing of the laws of the Methodist body. It is probable that Mr. Bradburn and the other preachers, who now turned their backs upon Mr. Kilham, never had such an end in view; and consequently, when Mr. K.'s avowed object was to reduce the absolute power of the preachers, by granting a portion to the people, in accordance with the wise provisions of the best governments, both spiritual and secular, for the mutual satisfaction of all parties, as well as for the purpose of preventing abuses—the men who had hitherto been his co-adjutors and friends, fell off, and became his enemies. This construction of the case seems natural, and explains what otherwise is nearly unaccountable in the conduct of several of the leading preachers towards Mr. Kilham. But if, in the preceding statement, we admit there might be no absolute dereliction of principle,



their intention throughout having been different from his—it is not so easy to acquit them of having acted towards him with great disingenuousness, and personal unkindness; as they could hardly help knowing that his main purpose was, all along, to carry out a plan for giving a share of legislative power to the societies; yet, while availing themselves of his services, so long as they found them useful in promoting the particular measures which they wished to secure, they never communicated to him that they could not go the full length to which he intended to proceed; but as soon as their own designs were fulfilled, they at once deserted him, and eventually promoted his expulsion. Whether this construction of the proceedings and motives of the parties alluded to, and implicated in the charge of having unworthily sacrificed Mr. Kilham, be correct or otherwise, it is the most charitable that suggests itself, and for that reason we are disposed to adopt it. In this place we say nothing of the subsequent conduct of the preachers towards Mr. Kilham, since many additional particulars will have to be given in the account of his trial, as well as after he had been cut off from the Connexion;—we may therefore pass on at present to other topics.

As the time for holding the Conference in Manchester approached, Mr. Kilham prepared to attend it, and to take his final leave of Scotland, where he had laboured during three years. In order to avoid breaking in upon details referring to public matters, we have omitted mentioning, in the present chapter, one or two things of a personal and domestic character, respecting Mr. Kilham and his family, which may now be introduced.

Shortly after being stationed at Aberdeen, Mrs. Kilham's health, in consequence of going abroad too soon after a premature confinement, became so much impaired as to threaten the speedy termination of her life, which was a cause of great anxiety to him, especially amidst his many important undertakings. Her affliction was the more distressing, both to him and herself, as it often affected her nerves so as to produce

mental grief and perplexity almost amounting to distraction. This rendered it no small trial for Mr. Kilham to be obliged to leave her to fulfil his engagements in the circuit, and at Conference; yet such were her piety and zeal, that in her most painful state she would not hear of his staying at home when his presence was required elsewhere to do the work of his Divine Master; and she often constrained him to depart, when his duty to her would have led him to have remained, to comfort and support her when she was almost overwhelmed with trouble. Her affection for him, and her unwillingness, even by her affliction, in the least degree to be the means of hindering him from the performance of any of his duties, are apparent from her letters to him when absent. The following is only a specimen of several in which she endeavours to sooth his mind, and remove his fears on her account:—

MY DEAR ALEXR.

With great thankfulness and many tears I read thine this morning. Be not unhappy concerning the latter part of my letter; thou alone art privy to my complaints, and shalt be, and I pray that the severest part of them may be sanctified to us both to all eternity. I bless the God of our mercies that I have better tidings now, for my health is much restored within the last ten days, and my strength and spirits have greatly returned. I am almost a wonder to myself; I am low sometimes, but it does not continue long, and through the blessing of God, I find myself getting daily advantage over my weakness; and I have cause to hope the Lord will be pleased to continue me a little while longer for thy sake. He has not forsaken us in the darkest hour, and if we live to him, he will set our feet upon the rock of ages, and bring us into peace and liberty, for his name's sake. Stay the time of thy appointment, and be happy; and come the best way that offers, not thinking of us—we will wait patiently. \* \* \* I want nothing but what reason, guided by religion, will freely grant. I wish to bear a part of every burthen that falls to our lot, as we pass through this wilderness world, and with the greatest cheerfulness and readiness of mind to make thy way as smooth as my poor abilities are capable of making it. Sarah is well; she says, I must be father and mother to her, since her father stays so long away.

I must once more bid adieu, and leave all thy concerns in the hands of Him who watches over us by night and by day. When it is well with thee, remember us ; that while we are spared we may go hand in hand along the thorny path of life, and keep the promised land in view. The blessing of the Most High rest upon thee, and give patience to suffer his righteous will.

I am, thy affectionate,

S. KILHAM.

On being removed from Aberdeen, it was the wish of Mr. Kilham still to remain in Scotland, for the subjoined reasons, which he enumerates in a letter to a brother preacher, dated July 3rd, 1795:—"1. It appears the Lord has pointed out my way here, and blessed my labours a great deal more I think this year than the last. 2. Both our minds (Mr. and Mrs. Kilham) are averse to going to England, till there be complete liberty to worship God as we do in this kingdom. 3. My dear wife is perfectly resigned to Scotland, and wishes to continue in it, if my efforts might be acceptable and useful." He had accordingly, at the Aberdeen district meeting, been put down for Dundee, with a recommendation for Conference to confirm this appointment ; but it did not think well to do so, and he was fixed in the Alnwick Circuit for the following year. Previous to the Conference, a request was made for him to be re-stationed in Newcastle, where he had laboured the year before he went to Aberdeen. The invitation was conveyed by Mr. Wm. Smith, son-in-law to Mr. Wesley, a liberal-minded and excellent man, with whom Mr. Kilham had continued to correspond occasionally during the whole term of his residence in Scotland, and who, in a very kind letter, says, "You have now had a fair opportunity of trying your strength in Scotland, where you have scattered abundance of sacred truth, which I doubt not will take root and spring up on a future day ; but notwithstanding your success and usefulness in Aberdeen, I am sorry to observe the country does not appear to agree with dear Mrs. Kilham. Ought you not for her sake, (if for no other) to endeavour to be in England next year ; and, if so, have

you any objection to Newcastle? If you could accomplish this, it would be highly acceptable to me, and many others both in the town and country."

It was not solely as a public teacher, that Mr. Kilham gave satisfaction, and acquired respect, in the circuits where he laboured, but, in great part, from the manner in which he fulfilled the pastoral duties of the sacred office. He was a common friend, and found time for doing every thing which could gain the affections, and promote the welfare, of the members of society, each of whom he knew and visited—caring for, counselling, and assisting them in every way which was likely to promote their best interests. Among the copies of his letters which are preserved, we find several written for other persons, who had recourse to him for help on particular occasions, and whom he furnished with suitable remarks to be sent to those whom they wished to address. For the purpose of giving some idea of what we refer to, we may state that one of these letters is noted as "written at the request of Mr. and Mrs. —, to endeavour to reclaim their son." Another, "for —, to his brother, who had forsaken his lawful wife, and gone to live with another woman." Many more might be mentioned, relating to different cases, were it necessary. They are all on spiritual subjects, and intended to benefit the soul; shewing that while, as a minister of the gospel, among other duties, he inculcated upon christians the necessity of seeking the salvation of their ungodly relatives, he was willing, on application, to help them to perform these fraternal acts of kindness in as faithful and efficient a manner as possible.

Mr. Kilham concluded his ministry in Scotland by publishing "A Farewell Address to the Methodist Congregations in Aberdeen, and the Circuit;" in which, after enumerating the doctrines which he had preached among them during three years, he speaks to each particular class of persons, into which his hearers might not improperly be divided, according to character. His principal object in this, was to encourage the pious to persevere in their christian course; and to admonish and warn those, who, amidst the many spiritual

privileges which they possessed, had hitherto neglected the salvation of their souls, not to venture any further in the way of sin, lest they should become hardened in unbelief, and be finally lost. But in connection with this purpose of doing good, Mr. Kilham's design in printing the Address, was, to leave behind him, with a people who had shown both to himself and family the greatest kindness, a token of the affection which he bore for them, and which he did not wish to be extinguished by any local separation which might take place between them.

Before setting out for Conference, Mr. Kilham wrote another pamphlet,\* intended for the preachers only, and which he directed to be put into their hands on their assembling in Manchester. His object was to prevail on the brethren, who met from different parts of the Connexion to legislate for the general body, not to make any rules which should trench on christian liberty. With this in view, he shewed, 1st. that the plan of Mr. Wesley, properly understood, admitted of every change which might be found necessary for the promotion of vital religion. 2nd. That, while professing to imitate him, they had done many things, to which, had he been living, he would never have consented; such as deciding on the sacrament by the "lot," &c. 3rd. That, as there was no certain guide in religion

\* It ought to be mentioned, as affording strong evidence of Mr. Kilham's object in printing being to do good, that he circulated his pamphlets at his own cost, except in one or two cases, when those brethren who agreed with him in sentiment, voluntarily contributed to bear a portion of the expense of printing. Had he sold his pamphlets, when he first began to write in favour of reform in Methodism, among other imputations, a desire of gain might perhaps have been alleged against him; but as he distributed his works freely, no one could say that he aimed at pecuniary profit for himself. As to his having published under the assumed signatures of "Trueman and Freeman," "Martin Luther," &c., Mr. Kilham, in his private letters, assigns the two following reasons for not attaching his name to several of his early pieces. First,—he considered the circumstance of his being a junior preacher made it inexpedient for him to appear formally as an author, on controversial subjects. Second,—he was afraid that if his name were prefixed to what he wrote, he should have been put to more cost for postage than he could afford to bear, by the number of letters which would have been sent to him from different quarters.

but the Scriptures, their authority only ought to be recognised. Mr. Kilham also added several suggestions as to the proper manner of conducting the Conference business in the greatest peace, and to most advantage. From a remark in one of his letters, we are led to think he took the MS. of this pamphlet with him to Manchester, and had it printed there after his arrival. It was signed "Paul and Silas," and consists of 24 pages 12mo.

"On Tuesday the 7th of July," observes Mr. Kilham, "I took leave of my family, after having offered our prayers for the protection of the Almighty, and left Aberdeen, accompanied by several friends, who kindly went a few miles with me. When I stopped at an Inn, near Stonehaven, I humbled myself before God, and adored his name for his unspeakable mercies bestowed on me since I came into Scotland; I saw myself unworthy of a place among his people, and I mourned over my unfaithfulness in the work of the ministry. I was fully determined to give myself to God, and to watch diligently over my heart for the future. I pursued my journey under these impressions and resolutions. I met brothers Ingham and Thompson, at Montrose, where I preached that evening: I had the opportunity of preaching to the societies as I travelled, and arrived at Newcastle in safety, though frequently uncomfortable from the extreme heat of the weather. Mr. Bogie preached the first night, and we held a watch-meeting the second, and were blessed together. We went forward to Manchester; Mr. Bogie and I were appointed to Mr. Thomas Heamer's, Princess Street, Salford. Many of the friends having read 'Martin Luther' were inclined to think favourably of its author, and had invited me to stay with them during Conference, and I had all the kindness and affection shown me that the heart could wish."

## CHAPTER VI.

FROM CONFERENCE 1795, TO CONFERENCE 1796, WHEN MR. KILHAM WAS STATIONED IN ALNWICK, WHERE HE PUBLISHED THE PROGRESS OF LIBERTY, &c.

THE Conference at Manchester, in 1795, was more numerously attended than any similar meeting since the establishment of Methodism; which was attributed to the agitated state in which the Connexion had been placed during the whole of the previous year, owing to the disputes on the Bristol affair. And as it was expected some decision would take place, which might give a future preponderancy to one party, the preachers holding High Church principles, and those on the liberal side, each class being jealous of the other, had respectively exerted themselves to bring together as many as they could prevail on to attend in Manchester, for the sake of having all the votes they could muster on so important an occasion.

The trustees, also, having taken the alarm, had been corresponding with each other, and holding meetings—in some cases, with a view of supporting and making common cause with those at Bristol, in order to prevent the introduction of the sacrament; and in others, to encourage those preachers and societies who sought to have all the ordinances established among the Methodists; and trustee-delegates had been appointed in great numbers, on both sides, to meet at Manchester at the time of Conference, that, if possible, some plan might be fixed upon for their future government. It was evident on all hands, that the Connexion had arrived at a crisis, and was in the greatest danger of becoming divided;—of course, much anxiety prevailed.

The deputations of trustees all met together at Manchester in the first instance; and in their discussions, though differing widely in some respects, they seemed to

be agreed on one point, which was, that the preachers possessed too much power. The Bristol trustees, and those who supported them as a party, moreover contended, that whatever authority the preachers might be induced to relinquish, should be attached to the trustees; while the liberal party maintained that the members of society ought to have more influence in Connexion matters than they then possessed. At length, two propositions were submitted to the meeting,—one by the High Church trustees, for an address to Conference, requesting a sort of Act of Uniformity to be passed, which should make the whole of the societies uniform in discipline, by bringing them back to the original plan of Methodism. The other proposition, introduced by those trustees who were in favour of the societies having greater liberty, was for them to receive the sacrament either at church or at their own chapels, with other privileges of a similar nature. The contention between the parties, however, became so sharp, that they could not continue to meet together with satisfaction; and those who advocated the principle of toleration withdrew, and began to assemble by themselves. Each party of trustees appointed a deputation to wait on Conference with an address drawn up according to the opposite views which they had taken: and when these addresses had been received, the Conference nominated a committee to devise a plan of accommodation, for the purpose of negotiating a peace with the contending interests which existed in the Connexion. After spending several days in considering the matter, the committee produced a set of propositions, which, after having been approved by Conference, were sent to the trustees for their acceptance or animadversion. Several alterations being proposed, the Conference appointed a few preachers to confer with the trustees personally on the subject; and at length a number of particulars were agreed to, which were adopted, and became known in the Connexion as “Articles of Pacification.” These relate,—First, to the Lord’s Supper, Baptism, &c. And under this head it was ordained for these ordinances not to be administered



except the majority of the trustees of the chapel, and also the majority of the stewards and leaders, were agreed as to their allowance; and in all cases the consent of the Conference had to be obtained. 2nd. Concerning Discipline. The appointment of preachers was to remain solely with the Conference, but if the majority of trustees, or of the stewards and leaders of any society, believed that any preacher appointed for their circuit was immoral, erroneous in doctrine, deficient in abilities, or that he had broken any of the rules, they had authority to summon the preachers of the district, and all the trustees, stewards, and leaders of the circuit, to meet. And if, after examining the case, the majority judged the accused preacher guilty, he was to be considered as removed from that circuit: and the district committee should appoint another preacher. The meeting had, moreover, authority to suspend the said preacher from all public duties till the Conference.

It was also added, among other rules, in the shape of addenda,—

“We all agree, that the pulpit shall not be a vehicle of abuse.

“It has been our general custom, never to appoint or remove a leader or steward, without first consulting the leaders and stewards of the society; and we are resolved to walk by the same rule.

“To prevent as much as possible the progress of strife and debate, and consequent divisions in our Connexion, no pamphlet or printed letter shall be circulated among us, without the author’s name, and the postage or carriage paid.”

As the preachers still retained the whole legislative power, this arrangement was not satisfactory to many of the trustees; yet, since the majority were agreed to accept it, the rest submitted, at least for a season. The changes made were, indeed, so far as they went, very important improvements upon the former plan; inasmuch as the will of the majority was therein recognised as authority for having the sacrament administered; a method was also appointed for trying preachers,

which gave the people some means, if they were judged unworthy, of suspending them until Conference; and lastly, it seemed to be admitted, though in terms much too loose and indefinite, that the leaders and stewards were not to be appointed or removed by the preacher, without consulting the other leaders and stewards of the circuit. These alterations were certainly favourable to the laity, and, as such, were in every respect valuable. If those trustees and preachers who held liberal opinions, were disappointed in the Conference not extending the privileges of the people further, the High Church trustees were, especially at first, dissatisfied that it had gone so far; and perhaps, all things considered, the Conference did nearly as much as it could at that time, and the future was looked to for the completion of the work.

Mr. Kilham kept a diary of the proceedings at this Conference, which filled forty-three pages of post quarto paper, very closely written. The particulars which he noted down, shew that he and others aimed at much larger concessions than could be obtained, and that, having done all they could in the cause of christian liberty, they submitted, under the testimony of a good conscience.

A few extracts from this MS. may be acceptable, as they throw some light on subjects which have frequently been referred to. Speaking of that part of the plan of pacification which refers to the sacrament being granted to the majority, with certain restrictions which were deemed objectionable, Mr. Kilham states, that the considerations which induced those preachers who had argued for full toleration, to give in, were, "1. We have gained a great deal more than we expected. 2. Our people are not prepared for more at present. 3. In two or three years we shall have all that we wish. These are the sentiments of many of us." "August 2nd. We learned yesterday, that the High Church trustees had rejected our proposals *in toto*, and that they would enter a protest against our measures, and retire from Manchester as soon as possible, in order to prevent us from having power over the people. This was fully

determined on Saturday night, but they softened before morning, and seemed more pacific."

"Monday, 3rd August. A letter was read from the trustees, to know whether our proposals were our ultimata or not. Mr. Benson and others conversed with several of them yesterday, and endeavoured to explain our rules. They were a good deal satisfied. A letter was sent to prevent any ill consequences, and at the same time we gave them two rules which were made this morning. The first is to prevent the preachers from disturbing the societies on either side by preaching, exhortation, or conversation. The second is to bind up local preachers, trustees, and leaders from conversation. We opposed both these rules, as being against liberty of conscience and liberty of speech, urging that they would prevent that freedom which was necessary to our welfare, and expose us to the rage of those who are our enemies; but our influence could not prevent them passing, and we were constrained to submit. However, we entered our protest against these measures, and hoped this would satisfy our minds, and be of use hereafter.

"In the evening, after our debate, it was agreed that the committee of preachers should attend the convention of trustees, and do every thing in their power to bring them to a right mind: they were to go as far as possible in seeking reconciliation, and endeavour to obtain peace on the best terms they could."

"Tuesday morning. After breakfast, the committee reported what had passed between them and the trustees. Several alterations to our propositions were proposed. They wished us to add, 'where there will be no division or separation by the introduction of the sacrament.' This was objected to by many, as bringing us back to the unanimity rule. A long debate took place on the subject. Messrs. Thompson, Benson, and Bradburn explained the word separation, by stating it did not consist in one, five, ten, twenty, a hundred, or any number of persons leaving us, unless they had a preacher at their head. This new and curious definition we were charged to conceal from the trustees, though we might

keep it in remembrance ourselves. Many of us protested against it; we told them before it passed, that it was jesuitical, and bordered on dissimulation; but a majority of preachers bore down all before them, and we were obliged to yield. In this debate, we discovered a deep-laid scheme to bring in a committee of five, to inspect our buildings and superintend our affairs in critical cases between Conferences. Though this was couched in great subtlety of words, it was rejected, and we were resolved not to become subject to such influence."

"Wednesday, 5th. In the afternoon, as soon as we were returned from dinner, Mr. Bradburn brought forward a motion for travelling bishops.\* He used all

\* Mr. Kilham was fully set against the Bishop's plan, from a conviction that its effect would be injurious both to people and preachers, by bringing the great body of the latter under the influence and controul of a few individuals; and that, however meekly they might bear themselves at first, either they or their successors would afterwards assume a tone and authority which nothing could satisfy or conciliate, but the unqualified submission of those in the ordinary ranks. And in reference to the laity, it was Mr. Kilham's opinion that they ought to have the means granted for governing themselves, instead of appointing any new order of officers from among the preachers to rule them without their being consulted. The Bishop's plan, therefore, had his entire disapprobation; but it was a favourite scheme with Mr. Bradburn and several of the preachers, who had acquired the reputation of being liberal on account of having advocated the giving of the sacrament in the Methodist chapels; and as Mr. Mather and the High Church party agreed with Mr. Bradburn in promoting the Bishop's plan,—when Mr. Kilham wrote against it, so as to exhibit its tendency, and bring it under ridicule—those preachers who had hitherto been at variance were easily brought to act together against him. In his "Progress of Liberty," Mr. Kilham having noticed the Bishop's plan in a way which made it impossible for it to be proposed for adoption any more, it will not be surprising that its friends, in their disappointment, should avail themselves of some pretext for expelling him from the Connexion. The passage referred to is annexed:—

"Three times, under different forms, did the Bishop's plan make its appearance last Conference. It was brought forward and supported by men of the first-rate abilities in our Connexion: but they had the mortification of seeing it rejected, by a vast majority of the preachers, in full connexion. It first appeared under the idea of a committee of five, to be called by the humble name of a building committee. Their office was to examine any affair like that of Bristol last year, and to determine whether a new chapel should be built or not, in case of a similar division. We had, however, read of the feigned humility and power of popes

his rhetoric to recommend this plan, and its benefits were held up as highly advantageous to the people; different gifts would, he said, be useful, and the preachers who thus travelled would be a universal blessing. After labouring the subject to the utmost of his power, when he had done, a general clamour took place to 'down with the bishops!' We endeavoured to overthrow his scheme by shewing—1. That it would give these men undue power and influence. 2. It was cal-

and bishops, and we prevented their lordships from mounting the scaffold. One would have ascended with his plumb line and the square,—another with his apron and trowel,—a third with a burden of bricks,—a fourth with a hod full of mortar,—and my lord primate with the corner stone, that after he had laid it with the grace of voluntary humility, they might all stand above us and our brethren, on the tower they had built, and command our steps, while we moved in a circle below them. When they were defeated in this scheme, after they had breathed a little, they came directly to the point, and wished to have men appointed to travel through the circuits, not to interfere with the concerns of the preachers, but purely for the benefit of our souls, and the souls of others. They were to be the servants of all: and only to do good by their word and doctrine. One of them preached up the advantages of itineracy; another told us of the sayings of Mr. Wesley on this head; while many looked with a wishful eye towards the office of a methodistical apostle. All was meekness and humility in proposal. No titles above their brethren,—no power or influence, but by the gospel,—no honour or reverence, but purely for their works' sake,—no revenue, but what they should pick up among the people, in their free donations. But, alas! our faith failed us, and we opposed with success this humble, primitive plan. When they were defeated a second time, they endeavoured to quiet themselves, by believing in hope against hope, that the time might come when we should see into the advantages and necessity of their plan. After this defeat, it was some time before their hearts sufficiently revived to make their last effort. It was, however, at length brought forward, with all the art and eloquence of our chief speaker, under the proposal of a committee of three, to be called an executive head, and to be in three parts of the kingdom, remote from each other, to give energy to our laws. This head of influence, placed upon our body in a triangular form, like a three-cocked hat, was to do wonders to and for us. The very men were named, who might be suitable for this curious head, and everything proposed which was necessary to put them upon our shoulders. But we either saw, or supposed we saw, in one of them, the face of a calf, to give us simple, innocent looks, and do nothing but blare at us,—in another, the face of an eagle, to pluck out our eyes, and then soar a vast height above us,—and in the third, the face of a lion, to frighten us by his roaring, or to break us in pieces, if we could not make our escape, by his unmerciful teeth. This led us again to reject the humble proposals of our venerable fathers and brethren; and being the same majority as before, we easily prevailed. Here ends the chapter of bishops."

culated to create divisions amongst the societies. 3. It would be expensive. A majority being of this opinion, the plan was condemned. Bradburn would then have persuaded us that he was only in jest, but we saw through the matter, and beheld his defeat with thankfulness."

"Thursday. Mr. Bradburn moved again to have bishops under another form. He proposed for a few individuals to have executive power lodged in their hands, and named three of the preachers for that purpose; but this was resisted, and it was obliged to be given up."

On referring to the "Articles of Pacification," as published in the Minutes of Conference, it will be observed that several expressions are ambiguous, and liable to be variously construed. It is due to Mr. Kilham, and other preachers who on that occasion acted with him, to state, that an effort was made to prevent any thing equivocal in the rules, by having them put into the plainest and clearest language. The blame, therefore, of ambiguity in construction, does not rest with them.

On this subject he says,—

"In the time of the Conference, many of us refused to vote for different Articles of Pacification. We entered our protest against them at the time they were read. When we saw an appearance of some of our rules being capable of two meanings, I drew up the following address to the Conference, which was signed by 58 of the preachers. Many more would have signed it, if they had had an opportunity. Most of those that did sign, were very respectable men, as their names would testify, were I to publish them.\*

\* As the names of the preachers who signed this address are appended to the copy in Mr. Kilham's hand-writing, it may be satisfactory now to print them. They are the following:—Thos. Hanby, Richard Reece, Samuel Taylor, C. Kirkpatrick, Robert Lomas, James Bogie, A. Suter, J. Stamp, John Hickling, John McKersey, James Rogers, C. Atmore, J. Cole, John Furness, John Atkins, Joseph Pescod, Joseph Sutcliffe, Miles Martindale, Robert Miller, John Renyolds, Joseph Entwistle, John Kershaw, Jas. Anderson, Wm. Thom, Philip Hardcastle, Wm. Jenkins, Thos. Rutherford, Thos. Simionite, John Gaultex, Benj.

“Honoured Fathers and Brethren,

“We are extremely sorry that anything should cause us to differ in sentiment from a majority of the Conference. We are constrained to do it, from a principle of truth and honesty. It appears to us, that no rule made in this house should be capable of bearing a double meaning. We are sorry to find an appearance of duplicity in some of our rules. We exceedingly object to the addition which is made to the first proposition of reconciliation, unless you add to it Messrs. Thompson, Benson, and Bradburn’s explanation of the word separation. If this be not granted, we jointly enter our protest against that, and every other rule of the same nature. And entreat the preachers met in Conference, to respect their character, by making their rules so explicit, that no person may misunderstand them. We are, your affectionate brethren in the Gospel,” &c.

“Is there anything,” added Mr. Kilham, when he published this document, “in this address, but what reason and the Bible require? A clamour, however, was made against us before it was read, and the president actually suppressed it, without its being publicly read to the preachers. Several cried out it was designed to divide us: and it was some time before they would cease complaining on this head. Does not this address breathe the spirit of the gospel, in advising the Conference to make its rules and laws so explicit, that they may be known by all—and in recommending truth and honesty in all our measures? If this divide us, what is it that keeps us together? If our opposing brethren had suffered it to have been read, it is very probable they would have been of a different mind.”

So far as regards himself, this Conference passed

Leggatt, Thomas Greaves, Thomas Rogerson, Wm. Heath, A. Kilham, John Grant, Jonathan Crowther, Timothy Crowther, James Jay, John Denton, William Sheldmardine, Abraham Mozeley, Thos. Roberts, James Buckley, Andrew Mayer, Thomas Dunn, William Blackburn, George Whitfield, Edward Jackson, Robert Smith, Thomas Cooper, Thomas Gill, William Stephenson, William Palmer, Theophilus Lessey, Chas. Kyte, Jonathan Cousins, Alexander Cummin, William Simpson.

over more agreeably than Mr. Kilham had anticipated. He had expected that some charge would have been preferred against him by Mr. Mather, on account of the passage respecting him in "Martin Luther;" but the subject was not introduced to Conference. On Mr. Kilham's arrival in Manchester, Mr. Mather very formally, and in the presence of several preachers, delivered a letter into his hands, apprizing him that he should require him to answer before his brethren for what he had written against him. This seemed, however, only done for the purpose of intimidating Mr. Kilham, and to bring him, if not to confess that he had acted wrong, to some terms, which should prevent similar animadversions for the future; but Mr. Kilham, instead of being afraid, replied to Mr. Mather's letter, in writing, in a way which indicated no dread of meeting him before Conference. The matter was then allowed to rest for some days by Mr. Mather, who afterwards sought a private interview with Mr. Kilham, to which he consented; and when it had taken place without Mr. Kilham having been induced thereby to profess sorrow for what he had written, Mr. Mather still threatened to bring the matter before Conference,—but he did not do so, and the affair was allowed to drop. The reason of this may be inferred from the following passage in Mr. Kilham's diary:—

"I was very happy to find, that not only trustees, leaders, and many respectable members of the societies, were on my side, but a majority of the preachers expressed their satisfaction, and seemed thankful for what I had done; and some of them contributed towards the expenses I had been at in publishing the pamphlets,—declaring I deserved the thanks of every friend to liberty, and of the Methodists in general."

Mr. Kilham proceeds to say,—

"After the most important business was finished, I and a few more of the preachers left the Conference. Many reflections arose in my mind on leaving Manchester. I could not but bless God for his kindness manifested to me—he had been better to me than all my fears; for I found I had the affections of the most



respectable preachers, and many of the trustees, who are liberal. These showed me every kindness in their power, and such as I am conscious I by no means deserved. By the desire of my friends at Leeds, I called to see them, and spent a day in that place: many of them are warm advocates for the truth, and for the liberty of the people. They are zealous in the cause, and I gave them all the advice and encouragement I could, and spent some time comfortably among them. They generously offered to bear any part of the expense I had contracted in printing, and to render me any other assistance in their power, and appeared desirous to strengthen my hands in the good work of the Lord. I arrived in a day or two in my circuit (Alnwick), and soon after my wife and child came by sea from Scotland, having been advised to it by the physician, who recommended a voyage as likely to prove beneficial to her health. I found great thankfulness to the Father of mercies on meeting them well, and in safety, after an absence of nearly two months. I immediately engaged in the duties of my office, and found many encouragements. May I have grace to live in every place as a true minister of the Gospel, that I may save my own soul, and also the souls of all that may hear me!"

The following letter may be given, as illustrative of Mr. Kilham's faithfulness in reproving sin, when detected; and of the spirit in which he acted towards those who violated the rules of Christian duty:—

6th Oct., 1795.

DEAR BROTHER,

You may be sure I was greatly surprised on Saturday, when I learned your name, and was informed that you were the person who frequently preached at Felton, and in other places, among our people. If I had not seen you intoxicated myself, and had not had others to grieve with me on that account, I should not have believed a flying report of your being overtaken with that sin. Since that day, however, I have been informed by several persons, that you have previously been in the same condition; and as such is the case, your preaching cannot be acceptable to our people, nor is it probable

that God will own your labours with success. If you had been surprised into this sin once or twice, and had then humbled yourself before God, and sought pardon, and grace to help in future, it would have been a different matter.

As I wish to do every thing openly and fairly before my brethren, your case will be considered in our quarterly meeting on Friday next. If you can come forward, and let us hear what you have to say on the subject, you may depend upon it, every step shall be taken which is necessary on the occasion. Or, if you will write us a few lines, directed for me at the Methodist chapel in this town, we shall hear with meekness what you have to advance in your own justification. God is my witness, that it is far from my purpose to behave to you in any thing contrary to what Jesus Christ and his Apostles direct.

I am, your's,

ALEX. KILHAM.

To Mr. —, Local Preacher, Alnwick.

P.S. It is probable, if we hear nothing from you on Friday, we shall be under the painful necessity of preventing you from preaching at Felton, till it be manifest to all that you are living soberly, righteously, and godlily.

The individual to whom the foregoing letter was addressed, wrote to Mr. Kilham in reply, acknowledging his misconduct, and professing repentance; so that it may be hoped this faithful admonition was a means of his recovery from the sin into which he had fallen.

We now come to notice another of Mr. Kilham's publications—"The Progress of Liberty," which he wrote at Alnwick, in the latter end of 1795, and for which he was expelled from the Connexion at the next Conference. As this pamphlet came under the consideration of two district meetings, which will have to be mentioned shortly, and of the preachers at their annual assembly, when Mr. Kilham was accused and condemned, it is not necessary at present to specify the passages which were objected to; they will necessarily be cited in the account of his trial. We shall therefore, in this place, merely furnish an idea of his design in writing it, and of its general contents, so far as they

relate to the changes and reforms which he wished to be introduced into the body.

Mr. Kilham states, that on returning from Conference, when the Articles of Pacification had been adopted, he felt, on reflection, considerable dissatisfaction that so little had been accomplished towards establishing real liberty in the societies: and as a likely means of securing to them the full measure to which they were entitled, he judged it would be useful to enumerate the steps already taken, and the regulations which had been made, since Mr. Wesley's death; and also to supply an outline or plan of what he considered ought to be done, in order to give content to, and establish peace in the Connexion.

In a preface to the "Progress of Liberty," Mr. Kilham, anticipating an objection which had been made against him before, says,—“It may be supposed by many of our brethren, that I have taken too much upon myself, in offering this pamphlet to the public; but I hope they will candidly examine the steps which have led to it, before they pass sentence against me. I shall give a brief sketch of the different occurrences which have engaged me to act the part I have done; leaving every person that reads these pages at full liberty to acquit or condemn me, as his own judgment shall determine.”

He then proceeds to state how it happened that he had taken so active a part in the discussions which had occurred in the body since Mr. Wesley's death,—showing that he had been almost forced, by a series of circumstances, to do what he had done; and that having been so fully committed in the cause of liberty, he had no option but to go forward in endeavouring to complete the work which had been begun. He adds,—“I have no design to injure the cause of Methodism, or to lessen any of our brethren in the esteem of the people; but to prevail, if possible, on the preachers every where, to fix such a constitution as shall unite us to our followers in such bonds as shall never be broken. I make no apology for what I have done: but humbly intreat

all that read these pages, to believe that I have aimed at glorifying God, and being useful to our Connexion, in all I have written. If I am deceived, I hope God will prevent me from continuing in that state."

Besides the preface, the pamphlet consists of two parts,—the first being intended to prove, that as Mr. Wesley's object in establishing Methodism was to promote the salvation of souls, he had always adapted his proceedings to the circumstances in which he was placed; and that he had throughout often changed his plans to meet the wishes of the societies; and had, moreover, foreseen and foretold that other changes would be required after his decease. Mr. Kilham then proceeded to notice the alterations which had been made by the Conference, and the occurrences which had taken place in the Connexion since Mr. Wesley died, in 1791; and,—notwithstanding the preceding Conference had passed certain Articles of Pacification, which he examined, and showed to be defective in many points,—he maintained, that other regulations were still indispensable, and must be conceded before the societies would be satisfied, or their christian liberty secured.

The second part of the "Progress of Liberty" consists of "Outlines of a Constitution humbly proposed to the People called Methodists." He introduces the proposals with the following passage:—"As a spirit of jealousy has entered into the hearts of many of our leading men, upon different parts of our conduct, it would be our wisdom and interest, to remove it as far as possible. In many places, they have had just cause to complain. Their complaints have not exceeded the bounds of moderation. And the only way to remove their jealousy and silence their complaints, is, to act in concert with our people in every thing. In those circuits where the preachers do this, the people are happy and satisfied. They consider themselves highly favoured, and bless God for their privileges. But when other preachers of a different conduct are appointed, it exceedingly grieves them. They want something to be fixed, to prevent any preacher from acting

contrary to the interests of the societies, as well as to make the preachers act in concert with each other. It is probable, we may meet their views, without injuring ourselves in any thing. Let us only fix our plan in such a way, that every preacher shall be bound to maintain their interests as well as our own, and they will be perfectly satisfied. We cannot do this more to their satisfaction, and our own advantage, than by separating, as far as possible, the temporal and spiritual concerns of our societies, and giving them a suitable place in all our affairs. With a view to satisfy every reasonable person in our Connexion, and to help forward the salvation of the people, I shall humbly propose, what appears to me, an equitable plan,—and which must sooner or later be adopted, if we would render ourselves extensively useful in the vineyard of Christ. I do not mean that this plan must be adopted exactly as it stands: but I mean, that something of this nature must be appointed, otherwise there will be continued complaints, from almost every part of our Connexion.”

In conformity with the principle here introduced, Mr. Kilham sketched a plan which he believed would be fair and satisfactory, recognising and guarding, as it did, all the interests of the community. A few particulars may be given. First, instead of the preachers having the sole discretion in their own hands, Mr. Kilham laid it down, that “members ought to be received into and excluded from the society, by the consent of our people.” Second, that “when a leader is wanting, the people have a right to choose a person that shall watch over their own souls;” and “when a preacher removes leaders without the consent of the people, and appoints others contrary to their mind, it is a lording over their consciences.” Third, in regard to local preachers, Mr. Kilham proposed for them, instead of being appointed by the circuit preachers, to be examined and approved by the leaders and quarterly meetings, which should have the power of receiving or dismissing them. Fourth, that “as it is impossible to allow our people to choose their ministers,

on account of the itinerant plan, yet ought we not to give them all the satisfaction in our power, both in receiving, and continuing preachers to travel with us? What do they desire on this head? That every local preacher be a sufficient time on trial, before he is proposed to travel; and that he be proposed to travel in the March quarterly meeting, previous to the district meeting: and if a majority of those who attend that meeting object to his going out, that he be proposed no more that year." Fifth, he submitted, that lay delegates, from the quarterly meetings, should attend the district meetings. Sixth—"Lastly," says Mr. Kilham, "With submission to the preachers, and the Connexion at large, to appoint one or two lay delegates from every district meeting, to attend the Conference. That is, the delegates from the quarterly meetings shall have full liberty to choose out of their body one or two men to attend the Conference, to lay before the preachers the minutes of the district meetings, and to transact the affairs both spiritual and temporal, as far as they can, of the districts they represent."

These form a summary of the leading principles maintained by Mr. Kilham, in his "Progress of Liberty," the soundness of which it would be exceedingly difficult to disprove, whatever modifications might be proposed to be made in the manner of their application. The pamphlet, being written in a free style, and containing severe animadversions on the way in which the Connexion had been managed, with the pointing out of a number of abuses which had occurred in different places, necessarily rendered it unacceptable to those preachers who had acted a prominent part in Methodism. Nor did Mr. Kilham, with that precaution which perhaps ought to have been exercised under the circumstances, take very particular care to distinguish between the conduct of individual preachers, who had availed themselves of the arbitrary authority which they possessed to commit injustice, and the general body, who were unquestionably men of deep piety and moderation in the exercise of their ministerial prerogatives.

It will be perceived, when we come to his trial for writing this publication, what advantage was taken of this ; notwithstanding he declared again and again, both before and at his examination, that nothing could be farther from his intention than to bring charges against his brethren at large, whose usefulness he admitted, and for whom he had the highest possible regard.

In writing the "Progress of Liberty," Mr. Kilham intended to prove, first, that the Methodist government, being arbitrary in regard to its principle, was liable to be abused. Second, that it had, in fact, been abused in many cases. And, third, as a consequence, that such changes ought therefore to be made as would render the system as useful as possible, and equally protect all classes in the Connexion against wrong. These particulars constitute what may be termed the doctrine of the pamphlet; indeed, every thing else,—the language used, and the examples adduced—belongs merely to the mode of treating this doctrine, which may be in good or bad taste, correct or incorrect, without invalidating its substantial character.

The unreserved manner in which Mr. Kilham wrote his "Progress of Liberty," will be accounted for by observing, that he did not intend it for the public eye, but only for the preachers, and a few of the leading friends, as appears from his own statement in an address to the Alnwick circuit, respecting the way in which it transpired, contrary to his wish and the understanding which he had with the printer, who, before the pamphlet was published, and unknown to Mr. Kilham, sold a few copies to some of the dissenters, which immediately caused it to get abroad.

When the work had been forwarded to a number of places, Mr. Kilham was soon made acquainted with the sentiments of different individuals respecting it. The following letter was written by Mr. M. Longridge, who had published several things, and taken an active part in promoting liberty among the Methodists; and, being a man of sound judgment and excellent character, his influence was considerable.

*Sunderland, 8th December, 1795.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

The receipt of your letter and pamphlet would not have been so long unacknowledged, had I not waited an opportunity of reading it carefully over, before I wrote to you. The purport of it I do so perfectly approve, that (the Lord being my helper,) I wish by every scriptural means to cry aloud in the ears of the Conference, that unless a greater union is established between the different parts of the body, we appear to have no human or scriptural ground to prevent the most destructive division. A cry for mastery will be heard in our camp—a struggle for power must take place—the relation of christian brethren will cease—human policy, with all its infernal effects, will sever the Connexion—love will be lost—so far as we depart from scriptural principles, it must be so—the people (many of them) see it—they love, they revere the Conference, and forbear in hopes the preachers will prevent a contest, and gradually promote such measures as will support an union, on simple and New Testament grounds, applicable to the Connexion.

Every step, which supposes a division of interests between preachers and people, originates in that wisdom, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish. If we are not brethren, let us separate. If we are, let us act as such:—confide in each other, and keep close to the rule of God's word. Let the politicians of this world sustain their tottering plans by artifice. The Gospel needs it not. But why do I enlarge on a subject I have already so fully explained myself on to you?

The principle and general tendency of your pamphlet has my unfeigned prayers, that the Conference may very soon adopt some measures to incorporate the body at large with themselves, in every thing which respects our government. As I firmly believe this is the New Testament plan, I have no hope of lasting peace till it is fixed.

\* \* \* \* I wish my friend had avoided the levity and keen irony in some few lines of his book. You know they do not suit my views. I shall give one to each of our preachers, and do my best in other respects.

I write you without reserve. I believe you will not readily misunderstand me.

My love to Mrs. Kilham, and believe me sincerely

Your's,

M. LONGRIDGE.



Mr. William Smith, of Newcastle, and many more, both preachers and lay members, wrote to Mr. Kilham in a similar way, generally approving of the principles he had laid down in the "Progress of Liberty," and hoping he would persevere in advocating the cause which he had so largely benefited by his writings. Mr. Kilham, however, soon saw that a tempest was collecting around him, and that he must make every preparation in his power to meet it. The first intimation of this, was in a letter from Mr. Pawson, charging him with attacking the whole body of preachers, and applying personally what was intended only to be general in the pamphlet. Mr. Kilham replied, with a view of removing this impression, but to no purpose; as the offence was taken, and the plan to be adopted determined upon. We may insert a passage or two from Mr. Kilham's letter to Mr. Pawson, for the purpose of showing how ready he was to assure him that he meant nothing disrespectful towards himself:

*15th December, 1795.*

MY DEAR SIR,

\* \* \* \*

But why are you alarmed? Have I forged and published a number of falsehoods to blacken our Connexion? Or have I basely and wickedly misrepresented our affairs to make us to be abhorred by our people? If either of these are facts, then expel me from among you, without showing the least mercy. But if I have stated facts which cannot be controverted, and have suppressed many circumstances, instead of exaggerating those facts, why am I accused? If I have shown the grievances under which the people groan, and have endeavoured to point out a way in which we may fully satisfy them, without injuring ourselves, why do you rise up and persecute me? God is my witness, that I have spoken the truth as far as I know it, with no other view than to bring about such a reformation as the necessity of our affairs requires. I foresaw the storm that would gather, but determined to meet it in the name of the Lord Jesus. And instead of repenting of what I have done, I bless God for giving me courage to come forward in such a good cause. I am not in the least discouraged by what you have written. I had counted the cost, before my pamphlet

went to the press, and if you cast me out of the synagogue, the Lord Jesus will amply provide for me and my family. Can you suppose that I would have ventured my all to the stake, in publishing this pamphlet, if I had not eyed the glory of God in the good of our Connexion? The persecution I expect from my brethren, instead of being pleasant, is painful; but to bear it for the sake of Jesus Christ, is what I glory in before all. And I shall cheerfully, under the influence of divine grace, go without the camp, to bear the reproach of the Son of God, even from my brethren.

I cannot tell what part of my pamphlet you apply to yourself. There is not an aged preacher in the Connexion I respect more than I do you. And I believe you are striving to glorify God and save your own and other souls. But you either do not see the evils my pamphlet complains of, or you think them trifling. Perhaps our people will not tell you, or many of our aged fathers, their minds; but they tell us, and do not fail to throw out many severe hints, while they insinuate that many of the senior preachers have been so long in the habit of exercising undue power and influence over the people, that they will not, on any account, give up any part of it, unless they are constrained to do it by the members. I think you often suffer your judgment to be warped from what you had proposed, on account of political manœuvres, without duly weighing them.

\* \* \* I cannot tell how you twist what I have said, when you insinuate that I reproach the whole Connexion. I have guarded my expressions repeatedly against the influence of such insinuations. I hope you will read over the pamphlet again, and see the impropriety of your reflections. If you refuse to examine impartially, I am apprehensive many of our friends will act otherwise. \* \* \* \*

Your affectionate servant,

A. KILHAM.

But while Mr. Pawson and other preachers were taking personal offence at what Mr. Kilham had written, there were some of his brethren who viewed in a different light, and expressed their approbation of, the pamphlet. A very respectable preacher addressed him thus:—"I entirely approve of your outlines. The plan is most certainly comprehensive, simple, and all its parts properly adapted to the purposes of our good government. In case such a constitution should take

place, I cannot forbear an anticipation of the pleasing consequences. And I am confident that herein I am expressing the sentiments of the greatest part of the preachers into whose hands your Progress will come. There are two reasons which I think will induce a few to oppose it, with no small degree of violence. The first is, that your scheme is too developing: it will not let the public cash lie behind the screen. The second is, that it was not conceived in the sage garret of ....., nor brought forth with all the dignity of ..... Bps, but acknowledges for its father one who was in his cradle when ..... were travelling preachers! If the High Court, City-road, London, have not altered its ancient rules since the last assizes, the author of the Progress will be arraigned and tried. But I suppose his childish fondness for truth, and his recollecting that persecution always rendered more illustrious and triumphant, will fill him with zeal for its support, and make him bold where others would blush. I wrote a few lines to attend your Progress to ....."

Another, a senior brother, has the following passage:—"I write partly to encourage you, because I foresee you will have some powerful opposers among your brethren; and partly to advise you to be cautious in your proposals for a new constitution, lest your opponents should accuse you of self-sufficiency. A great part of your plan I approve of; especially respecting finances—the preacher's fund—admitting the people to assist us in these things—and consulting them about local preachers, and even admitting some of those to travel. For I have long been persuaded, if we take the people with us in all our affairs more than we have done, it will be better for us. I have heard many complaints from some of the most sensible of them; and I am sorry to say there is too much truth in their assertions. They say there is an appearance of duplicity in many of us, and therefore they cannot put confidence in us. There is nothing in the christian religion that need to be concealed. Let us do every thing in our power to convince both the world and our people that real Methodism is nothing else but real Christianity."

These testimonials were, however, in effect, as nothing, when weighed against the disapprobation of the most influential preachers, which was made known in a formal manner by the following communication, which they sent to Mr. Hunter, then stationed at Newcastle, and who was chairman of the district in which Mr. Kilham laboured, calling upon him to convene a meeting on the subject:—

To Mr. WILLIAM HUNTER, Chairman of the  
Newcastle District.

*London, 5th December, 1795.*

DEAR BROTHER,

We have met together solemnly to consider the pamphlet lately published by Alexander Kilham, entitled “The Progress of Liberty,” and think ourselves obliged to write to you on the subject, as the chairman of that district in which Mr. Kilham labours.

We detest the spirit of the book, and are persuaded it contains most malicious expressions against the body of preachers in general, and against respectable individuals in particular. We have no doubt the pamphlet has an immediate tendency to prejudice our people against their preachers, and to destroy the work of God. If it go into the world at large, it must give the public the most unfavourable opinion concerning us; it also tends to destroy our preachers’ fund, by holding out the assistants as a company of whining Jesuits, and consequently atrocious knaves. So bad a book has not been published among us, since the first revival of the work of God.

We, therefore, as persons implicated in Mr. Kilham’s charges, immediately advise and claim a district meeting. For Mr. Kilham can do us no harm as an open enemy, but he will do us unspeakable hurt as a secret one. If Mr. Kilham continue among us after such gross and malicious assertions, we to all intents and purposes plead guilty, and must by the public be supposed to be a company of villains.

We look up to you and the other members of the district committee for redress. Our wounded cause, and the characters of preachers in general, call for it immediately. The cause of God is at stake, and if justice is not done in this case, we may take our farewell of primitive Methodism. We desire you will read this our testimony against the malice

pride, and audaciousness with which the pamphlet under consideration is replete.

We are, your affectionate brethren, Thomas Coke, John Pawson, Francis Wrigley, William West, Thomas Rankin, George Story, Adam Clarke, Walter Griffith, George Whitfield, Richard Reece.

It is worthy of remark that the preceding letter carefully avoids all allusion to the *principles* which Mr. Kilham had maintained in his *Progress of Liberty*; and he is treated as having merely made a personal attack upon the preachers. This was not a fair representation of the matter; and even if it had been so, however strongly the individuals who signed this document, (said to have been drawn up by Dr. Coke,) objected to the "spirit of the book" written by Mr. Kilham, and to the severity of some of his expressions, they certainly did not themselves, in this instance, furnish a better specimen either of christian temper or conciliatory language, than was to be found in the most exceptionable parts of his pamphlet. And in case he had taken all the freedom with them which they charge upon him, we are much mistaken if the reader will not be of opinion, after the ample retaliation included in the terms "enemy," "gross and malicious assertions," "malice," "pride," and "audaciousness," that they might, without injustice to themselves, have forborne all further proceedings against him.

Mr. Kilham immediately wrote an answer to this requisition, which he addressed to the parties who had signed it, and which he not inaptly denominated a "Methodistical Bull," in allusion to the papal manifestos which used to create so much terror before the Reformation. This answer he afterwards published, together with the letter, or Bull, and some additional remarks in his own vindication.

Mr. Hunter, who was a most kind and moderate man, expressed himself, in a letter to Mr. Kilham, as being in great perplexity what to do, and for a time he seemed disinclined to comply with the requisition for a district meeting; at length, however, he convened one, which was held at Newcastle on the 18th of Feb.,

1796, and two following days, when a kind of investigation of Mr. Kilham's conduct took place, but without any decisive step being taken respecting him. The day before the trial commenced, a number of leading persons who coincided in Mr. Kilham's views, and approved generally of what he had done in promoting reform, assembled in Newcastle, and at a public meeting held for the purpose of sanctioning the cause of liberty, Mr. William Smith being in the chair,

“IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED,

1st. That the present is a suitable opportunity for stating the sentiments of the fore-mentioned societies upon the following subjects, to the Connexion at large.

2nd. That the prosperity of religion amongst the Methodists is in danger from the want of a fuller communication between the circuits and Conference, and from assistants having a power to act independently of their people, in the government of the societies.

3rd. That the following address fully expresses the sentiments of the meeting.

4th. That it be printed, and sent to the principal societies and preachers throughout the kingdom.

And 5th. That the following brethren be appointed a committee, for carrying the above resolutions into effect.

William Smith, George Jefferson, Robert Frost, *Newcastle*. John Grundell, *Byker*. Ralph Annett, Luke Mattison, *Alnwick*. Robert Cairns, *Monkwearmouth*. Robert Hutton, Michael Longridge, *Sunderland*. Robert Whitfield, *Hexham*.”

The address appended to these resolutions asserts,—

“1st. That according to the present existing rules of Conference (as far as we understand them) the Methodist preachers rule their people without consulting them.

2nd. That this is contrary to reason, revelation, and the natural order of society.

3rd. That this is one of the principal causes of the evils which prevail among us.

4th. That it has already shaken the confidence which ought to subsist between preachers and people.

5th. That the Conference only can open such an

intercourse with the societies, as will reconcile all parties, and remove every existing grievance."

The address occupies nearly five printed quarto pages, and, besides the foregoing, it contains some very plain and pointed statements,—such as the following:—

"Who can deny that we are a society in which the people have no voice? in which they are not permitted to deliberate on the choice of their own officers, formation of their own laws, or distribution of their own property? We have no alternative on any of these subjects but resistance." \* \* \* \*

"As it is contrary to Scripture, so it is also contrary to the natural order of society. We know but of two precedents to countenance it; the one is, the papal authority; the other, tyrannical civil governments. Both these assume a power of dictating to their people, and require implicit faith and passive obedience. We are decidedly of opinion, that the evils complained of may be attributed to this anti-scriptural and oppressive system. There are three evils which particularly threaten us. 1st. An increase of a worldly spirit. 2nd. Division in the societies. 3rd. Want of love to the preachers." \* \* \* \*

"These remarks sufficiently prove, that a want of deliberation with the people is the great source of all those evils that exist among us; and that it has already greatly shaken the confidence of many, we appeal to recent circumstances to prove. We hear the murmurs of the people; the preachers do not: they amount to this:—'Conference will do their own way; they do not wish to consult their people; they strive to act independently of them.' These are the complaints of those, who, from both good and bad motives, do not speak openly."

This address was extensively circulated throughout the Connexion, and being signed by a great number of respectable individuals, in addition to those who were present at the meeting when the preceding resolutions were adopted, it produced a strong sensation in many places.

As soon as the district meeting was opened, and its

object stated to be, "to take into consideration a late publication entitled *The Progress of Liberty among the Methodists*, by Mr. Kilham," Mr. Hunter, the chairman, read the following note which had been previously handed to him :

*Newcastle, 17th February, 1796.*

Honoured Fathers and Brethren,

There are four things which I particularly request you to resolve me in. 1. By whose influence and authority is this district meeting called? 2. What are the particular charges you mean to prefer against me?—Please to favour me with a list of them as soon as possible, that I may prepare my defence. 3. By what law do you mean to judge me? 4. I earnestly entreat that my trial may be open to all the leading friends, that shall be assembled in Newcastle to-morrow: and that I may have a jury chosen from among our people; half of them appointed by you, and the other half by me. If this reasonable, equitable request be not granted, I shall consider myself exposed to many things which are contrary to the feelings of an Englishman.

I entreat you to weigh these matters calmly before God, and act in them as the Bible directs; ever considering, that the eyes of our people are upon you; and unless you act an open, honourable part, in this matter, the minds of very many of our best friends will be exceedingly grieved.

I am,

Your affectionate Servant,

ALEX. KILHAM.

In reply to the first of these enquiries, Mr. Kilham ascertained that the meeting was held in consequence of the London letter signed by Dr. Coke and others. As a matter of principle, he contended, and it would seem with great propriety, that they had no right whatever, by the rules of the Connexion, to interfere with the Newcastle district or the preachers stationed therein. The second request, referring to the particular charges against him, the meeting refused to grant. Mr. Kilham made the third enquiry, in consequence of having received the joint opinion of three of the preachers, which agreed with his own, that if he had done any thing to subject himself to be tried at all, the investigation ought not to take place by a court composed of



preachers only, but as appointed by the Articles of Pacification passed at the preceding Conference. The annexed, which is the letter alluded to, written by three of the circuit preachers, will explain the case:

*May, 1796.*

DEAR BROTHER KILHAM,

A few of us being together at ——— and engaged in free and friendly conversation, among other things we took occasion to say a little concerning your case, and the rules of Pacification, with which it seems to be connected. After a good deal had passed on these subjects, we were unanimously of opinion, 1. That if you have broken any of our rules, by publishing your *Progress of Liberty*, it is Article the 7th, under the head of Discipline. 2. That you cannot be legally suspended by the district meeting, but ought to be tried by a court consisting of preachers, trustees, and stewards, as specified in R. 2, and alluded to in R. 5. 3. That the friends in London had either lost sight of the above-mentioned rules, or were disposed to set them aside, when they advised and claimed a district meeting, to have you tried and suspended—(by which we presume they meant a meeting of the preachers only). 4. That the district meeting, in refusing to admit trustees, stewards, and leaders, to attend at your trial, according to what is specified in the said rules, have acted contrary to their own laws. 5. That what you seem to have requested as a favour, you might have demanded as a just right; namely, to be tried by a jury consisting of preachers and people. 6. That you need not (except you please) submit to the sentence of the district meeting, should they be disposed to suspend you; but may appeal to such a court as is mentioned in the rules of Pacification.

We submit our opinion to your consideration. You are at full liberty to make what use of it you please. We remain, your very affectionate brethren in Christ, and hearty well-wishers in the cause of Truth and Liberty, &c.

The preachers assembled at the district meeting would not, however, allow this, but determined to try him themselves, according to the plan acted upon before the Articles of Pacification were passed. Mr. Kilham finishes his account of the preliminary arrangements, by adding, “They denied my fourth request, and would

neither suffer my trial to be open to our people, nor a jury to be appointed from among them. I then entreated that a few select friends might attend, to see that justice was done, but this reasonable request they would not grant. After frankly declaring, with a heart full of grief, that my trial was according to the rules of the Inquisition, and a burlesque upon common sense, I submitted to their will, not in the least fearing what they could do unto me. A number of addresses were sent to the chairman, from individuals and societies, which ought to have been read before the trial commenced; but they were not so much as laid on the table till within a few hours of the examination being ended."

After this settlement respecting the constitution of the court, the preachers present proceeded to examine the pamphlet; but what they did amounted only to something like giving a number of criticisms upon particular passages, which it is unnecessary to furnish in detail, as we shall have to state them in the account of his trial at the following Conference.

The investigation ended at that meeting, so far as Mr. Kilham was concerned, in an arrangement between him and his accusers, that the matter should lie over until the regular district meeting, to be held at Sunderland in May; and in the mean time he engaged not to print and publish the proceedings, unless it were in reply to any person who might appear against him in print. It is only necessary to add, that when another district meeting was held at Sunderland, after a short discussion, it was resolved to refer the whole case to Conference; so that, at the conclusion of two examinations, no judgment was passed on Mr. Kilham by the meetings. He published the particulars of these trials in a pamphlet, a short time before Conference.

The effect of the London letter, signed by Dr. Coke and others, was highly prejudicial to Mr. Kilham, inasmuch as it signified to the preachers generally, several months before the Conference met, what were the intentions of the leading men respecting him. If no such manifestation had proceeded from them, until he had

been brought to trial before the annual assembly, he would probably have been supported by a strong body of his brethren, as on former occasions ; but it having been ascertained beforehand, by the sentiments of that letter, that the governing party in the Connexion were agreed to condemn him, there were inducements, and also time, for numbers who had hitherto acted as his friends and coadjutors, to hesitate, and even to turn round and prepare to vote against him. On referring to his correspondence at this period, we perceive clear indications of what followed shortly after. From some who had written him in commendation of *The Progress of Liberty*, when it was first published, he received letters stating that they had read it again more attentively, and disapproved of this and that passage ; others qualified the approbation they had formerly given ; others, again, who had been accustomed to write him long and frequent letters, now apologized for the delay and brevity of their communications, and shunned those points, which, until lately, they had most largely and freely dwelt on ; and, finally, others who had contended for the privileges of the Methodists, began to express doubts whether they would make a good use of liberty if they had it conceded. In short, there were many intelligible signs given that he was about to be deserted by numbers who had afforded him every reason to expect they would have stood by him to the end.

Mr. Kilham, however, was not dismayed under these discouragements ; and that which would have broken down common minds, braced and nerved him for more vigorous action. Since so many who had advocated the principles of liberty, when contending for the Sacrament, and independent public worship, against the established Church, and also against the arbitrary conduct of the trustees of Bristol, and other places, were now becoming the opponents of freedom—the idea suggested itself to him of publishing a pamphlet in which should be embodied the opinions which had been once inculcated by these individuals. He mentioned the project to several friends, who heartily approved of it, and offered to assist as far as they could

in its completion. Mr. Kilham thus refers to the subject in his diary :—"As I was now so deeply engaged in this contest, I found myself under the necessity of proceeding, and of taking steps that I had not foreseen, and which became necessary from the circumstances in which I was now involved. I began therefore to prepare for another pamphlet, and to endeavour to execute it as soon as possible; this I entitled, 'A Free Enquiry, exemplified from the avowed sentiments of the most respectable preachers and leading friends in our Connexion, published in near fifty pamphlets and letters, since the death of Mr. Wesley.' As it contained a variety of extracts from publications which had been circulated amongst the Methodists for a year or two preceding, it might be considered as a general retrospect of what had been done by the societies, in claiming their liberties of the Conference. Mr. Longridge came over to Alnwick to help me in preparing this pamphlet, and spent two days with me in private: I found him very useful in arranging the subject, and in throwing the book into a proper form, and he gave me many hints which were of great advantage to the publication."

Again he writes,—“I hastened my work to the uttermost, and was determined not to lose a moment till it was finished: after I had proceeded as far as I could, I rode to Morpeth to meet Messrs. Longridge and Grundell, to read them what I had prepared, and have their further advice; we spent a considerable part of the night, and the next day, in perusing and altering what I had written; before we parted we fixed on several things that were to be corrected, and to undergo considerable alterations, and which created fresh labour for me, but they appeared of consequence, and I cheerfully submitted.”

This pamphlet, which was printed in Bristol, placed several of the preachers, who now stood opposed to him, in the very unpleasant position of being equally as much at variance with their former selves as with Mr. Kilham; but as the course of proceeding in reference to him had been determined upon, their being in danger

of becoming convicted of inconsistency had not the effect of changing their purpose or conduct.

Mr. Kilham's path of duty being plain to his own judgment and conscience, he went straight forward. Speaking of the future, he says :—

“I feel my mind fully determined to pursue the way that appears most for the glory of God, and the good of mankind. The Lord is undoubtedly on the side of them that trust in him, and I am determined to live devoted to his service: may the Lord sanctify the present contest in our Connexion to his glory! The preachers are making every possible opposition to a reform, and to the interests of the people, but the people seem determined in many places to claim their privileges. Accept, O Lord, of this last labour of love in the pamphlet I have written; may it spread through the societies, and become useful to them, in causing them to see their privileges, to claim them with meekness, and with that firmness which the truth inspires.

“From a letter I received from J. Crowther, he seems to be lukewarm in the cause to which he formerly gave his full and hearty approbation. He seems now not sufficiently willing that the people should have their privileges, for he supposes, according to the old doctrine, that they will not make a right use of them. But I think it sinful to act upon it: we have no right to monopolize the rights of the people, under the idea that we are their guardians.”

A few days afterwards, Mr. Kilham records another letter from Mr. Crowther, wherein he says, “he is bewildered, and hardly knows how to act; he still fears the people are incapable of properly using their privileges.”

These communications, as the reader will have anticipated, were preliminary to Mr. Crowther changing sides: and, notwithstanding all that he had said and written for liberty, when Mr. Kilham's cause came to be tried at Conference Mr. Crowther was among those who gave judgment against him.

In the midst of these desertions, however, he received

some assurances and tokens of fidelity. Mr. Kilham observes:—

“Our friends at Nottingham wrote me a very kind letter, offering any pecuniary supply I might be in want of, and also professed themselves willing to assist me in any other way in their power. I hope the Lord will bless and reward all that shew kindness to his unworthy creature; that society has come forward freely to my help.”

While Mr. Kilham was apprised of many, on whose countenance and assistance he had calculated, falling off from the cause of liberty at this critical moment, he received strong pledges of support from other quarters. In addition to the approbation of individuals, addresses were voted by several societies and circuits, thanking him for the services he had rendered to Methodism, and strengthening his hands in the work in which he was engaged. Nottingham, Manchester, Plymouth, Leeds, Newark, Lancaster, and other places in England, wrote to Mr. Kilham, approving generally of what he had done. The following, from Aberdeen, is a fair specimen of the rest:—

*Aberdeen, 8th March, 1796.*

To Mr ALEX. KILHAM, Methodist preacher, at Alnwick.

SIR,

We whose names are hereto subscribed, having called a full meeting of the leaders and managers of the Methodist society in this place, have met this evening, to consult about the tendency of your pamphlet intituled “The Progress of Liberty,” &c., and likewise, to consider if the charges brought against you, on its account, be just; and after having examined the subjects, and conversed together, resolved to lay our sentiments before you, and embrace this opportunity to do so. We approve of the pamphlet in general, except some sentences, which we think rather sarcastical. But more particularly—1st. We believe, because we have felt, that many of the evils which you point out do really exist among us, and therefore ought immediately to be laid aside. 2nd. We highly approve of the liberty you contend for. 3rd. We sincerely wish that Conference may establish a discipline among us, similar to what you have pointed out in your outlines; and we are persuaded, that if it please God to dispose

the hearts of Conference to do this, it will be a mean of settling these disputes and divisions, which unhappily have distracted our Connexion for some years past, to the grief of every well-wisher to our cause. 4th. We are astonished at the proceedings of those good men (and good men we believe they are) who demanded your trial, as well as those who brought such charges against you ; we cannot think they intended a combination against the interests of truth and liberty, and resolved to smother them while young ; but we are sorry to say, their conduct has that appearance. 5th. We think some of the charges made against you are so far from being crimes, that they will meet with the approbation of every unprejudiced mind, especially if disinterested. 6th. We think some of the charges are exceedingly unjust, and can never be fairly inferred from your pamphlet. 7th. We believe your motives are pure, and we are convinced you plead for the cause of God, and therefore think it our duty to support you, and the cause you have espoused, by every peaceable and prudent method in our power, and are resolved to do so, the Lord being our helper. May the God of peace, the giver of peace, and the lover of peace, send peace among us, and continue it among us for evermore !

We are, Dear Sir,

Your sincere well-wishers,

(Signed, &c.)

Mr. Kilham also received from Liverpool, Nottingham, &c., several sums of money to be appropriated in promoting the interests of reform. The Nottingham remittance was accompanied by the following letter :—

*Basford, 30th April, 1796.*

DEAR FRIEND,

The committee of Methodists, at Nottingham, have desired me to remit you five guineas, for which they expect you to send them such pamphlets as you judge best calculated to forward the cause of liberty among us ; they do not expect you to balance this by value in books, but leave it to your discretion, and will give you further assistance if you want it.

With respect to our affairs here, we have written letters to most of the principal societies in the district, requesting them to send delegates to meet at Nottingham, to demand our liberties ; they are to meet the day before the district meeting, on the 22nd of May, and as far as we can judge, our

letters have been well received, and the people enter into our views ; we should by all means have a supply of pamphlets by that time.

We never were so well satisfied with our preachers as at this time ; they all behave liberally in the present dispute ; and we should be sorry to have any part of our conduct considered as levelled at them : this we shall endeavour to avoid by a proper explanation. Mr. Hanby desires his love to you and your friends now

Wrestling in the glorious cause,  
Of truth, of freedom, and of equal laws ;

and I am persuaded, were all the preachers of his spirit and liberality, the contest would soon be at an end.

Believe me, Dear Sir,  
Your sincere friend,  
ROBT. HALL.

As the time for holding the Conference approached, it became more and more evident, from the steps already taken by the leading preachers in reference to Mr. Kilham's pamphlets, that they had resolved upon condemning and expelling the author. He accordingly went to London, where this assembly was to take place in July, 1796, fully anticipating what would be the result. Many of his friends were of the same opinion ; and Mr. Longridge, of Sunderland, with a forethought for his temporal comfort which cannot be mentioned without praise, kindly offered Mr. Kilham and his family an asylum, or temporary home, in his house, in case he were cast out from among the preachers.

The amount of labour which Mr. Kilham had to perform at this time, and afterwards, was exceedingly great. He neglected none of his duties as a preacher and the superintendent of a circuit ; while his writings, his frequent and long journeys to consult with friends, and his extensive correspondence ; occasioned him many times to sit up whole nights, which, with the mental anxiety necessarily induced by the circumstances in which he found himself placed, were certain to make an inroad on his constitution, though this might be imperceptible at first, both to himself and others. But in all his letters which we have seen, he never so much



as hints at any weariness, though some of them are dated "three o'clock in the morning," at which hour he had not been able to retire to rest. The imperfect state of Mrs. Kilham's health was, moreover, a cause of grief to him, yet in all other respects he had every reason to rejoice in her. Though afflicted, and needing assistance, she more than made up to him for his sympathy and attention, by her pious conduct, and, it may even be added, by her co-operation in the labours which he had to perform.

After he had published the *Progress of Liberty*, and found a host of enemies standing up against him, so far from offering any discouragement, or endeavouring to prevail upon him to relinquish, as a thankless and troublesome undertaking, the part he had sustained in promoting Methodistical reforms, she frequently exhorted him to follow the convictions of his own mind, and the openings of Divine Providence, not in the least fearing the consequences; often professing a willingness to live in the humblest situation, rather than he should be afraid of declaring himself faithfully to the preachers. Mr. Kilham observes, while writing her memoirs, after her death, that "the abusive, insulting letters we received from many quarters, together with the provoking language made use of by individuals, only moved her to be more earnest at the throne of grace, and more resolved to be fully and for ever the Lord's. If her spirits were depressed, she always found relief in the religion of Jesus. She placed death frequently before her, and had divine impressions upon her mind, in meditations upon it."

The following are passages from her letters to him when at Conference, and undergoing his trial and expulsion:—"If I could bear more of thy burthen for thee than I do, my heart would rejoice, even mine. None can be more willing to help, though many are more able. May the Lord bless, and send thee help from heaven!"

When she heard of his condemnation by the preachers, she wrote,—"*Language fails to tell thee of the distressing time we have had to pass through. I had*

many friends uniting to comfort me : others, that before appeared friendly, were rejoicing at what they supposed to be our downfall. In the midst of these deep waters, the Lord has kept me from sinking. His blessed word has been my support and my stay. I will hope that these dark clouds will pass away, and the dawn of better days will appear. Do not, my dear, be unhappy about us. I am willing to go any where. As soon as we can find a suitable place, a little room or two, with peace, will make me happy. May the Lord be ever present with thee, and lead thee into the paths of truth and peace ; and deliver thee out of the hands of thy formidable enemies, for they are many ! I recommend thee to His gracious protection, for He careth for thee ”

In another letter, written to a friend, she said,—“I am hoping, with humble submission to the divine will, to see better days. There is but one thing I am at present careful for, which is, the injury my dear husband may sustain in his character, unless he wipe off the various slanders his enemies have laid upon him. I hope I can be happy with any situation the providence of God may point out for us. His smile will bring peace into the meanest cottage.”

The devout and self-denying spirit shewn by Mrs. Kilham, justifies the notice which we have taken of her conduct in making the preceding extracts. She would, indeed, have been wronged by their omission. The affectionate terms in which she expresses herself, and her conscientious disregard of suffering in what she believed to be a good cause, cannot fail to secure a high degree of respect for her character.

The time of Conference having arrived, Mr. Kilham set out for London, staying a day or two in Leeds on his way, where the friends encouraged him by their kindness and prayers. On leaving them, he said emphatically,—“I am going to be judged by the Great Sanhedrim, but may God be glorified, and—the will of the Lord be done.”

## CHAPTER VII.

CONFERENCE, 1796,—MR. KILHAM'S TRIAL AND EXPULSION  
FROM THE METHODIST CONNEXION.

THE meeting of Conference in London, 1796, was looked forward to with even greater anxiety than the Manchester Conference had been the preceding year. Mr. Kilham's writings had exposed several abuses in the Connexion, which were considered as naturally resulting from a system where the legislative and executive power was placed in the hands of one class of individuals, who were not responsible to any other class for their conduct. The opinion was gaining ground, among the preachers\* as well as the people, that representatives from the societies might, without danger, be admitted to Conference; and deputations from trustees, which had before assembled in Manchester, had again been convened in London, where

\* This may be exemplified by the following document, shewing that in the Nottingham District all the preachers, with the exception of one, who merely had doubts on the subject, were willing for delegates from the people to be admitted to Conference :—

“ At a meeting of delegates from societies in this district, to consult on the grievances under which we labour, in consequence of the unequal distribution of power in our church government, a letter was written to the meeting of preachers held this week at Nottingham, complaining of and stating these grievances. The assembly of preachers having taken our letter into consideration, they have favoured us with the following reply. Which letter, as we think it reflects honour on the preachers that composed that meeting, we rejoice in communicating to our brethren in general. We think it a very extraordinary and singular instance of their liberality and candour, and are happy in having the opportunity of showing to our friends their impartial attachment to the cause of religion, and their willingness to establish it in its pristine and genuine simplicity. We do most heartily and sincerely rejoice in the prospect of that peace and universal love that we think we see approaching, and hope that mutual confidence and general liberality of conduct and sentiment, will entirely supplant those jealousies and discords that have unhappily

they passed several resolutions, and presented an address to Conference, in which they stated "that jealousies, destructive to the work, are spreading

so long distracted our religious community. We hope that both preachers and people will shortly make it manifest to all men, that they have but one cause at heart, one interest to defend; and that their joint prayers, their wishes, and their actions, all converge towards that desirable point, the glory of God and the salvation of mankind.

"Samuel Barlow, Thomas Tatham, Joseph Woodhouse, Charles Sutton, Nottingham; Robert Hall, Basford; Joseph Finch, Mansfield; William Huddleston, Arnold; William Joyce, William Burton, Ashby; John Welch, Derby; John Bradley, Coventry.

"Nottingham, May 26th, 1796."

The following is the reply of the preachers:—

"Dear Brethren,—We feel it our desire to promote, as much as possible, the credit and prosperity of that cause in which we (as ministers of the Gospel) are engaged. With this view, we honestly declare our wish that the grievances of which our people complain may meet with the redress of Conference. We only speak the sentiments of our hearts, when we say, that we sincerely love the brethren, and feel it the greatest pleasure of our lives to spend, and be spent, for their present and future advantage; and we are fully persuaded, that while we act disinterestedly, we have nothing to fear, but every thing to hope. We are happy to find, that Mr. Benson has no objection that all preachers should come into Connexion with the voice of the people; this (to say nothing of prudence) we consider to be no more than equity and justice will claim. Agreeable to such principles, (principles we wish ever to abide by) we further observe; that members of society should be admitted or excluded by a majority of the leaders:—that the circuit and society stewards should be the voluntary choice of a majority of our people, together with the preachers:—and that all other regulations which concern us, (as a religious body,) should be grounded on a foundation as lasting, as it is just; and as prosperous, as it is prudent. We see no reason to object to the admission of delegates from our societies, into our district meetings; nor of delegates from our circuits into the Conference; to assist and advise with us, in all matters which properly concern them, as representatives of the people. As the friends of our common cause—as children of one heavenly father—as fellow-brethren in Christ Jesus, we entreat you, 'Pray for us,' that He who governs in Zion, may ever preside over us, and determine in all our councils.

"We are, dear Brethren, your servants for Christ's sake,

"Thomas Hanby, Simon Day, John Beaumont, Thomas Dunn, George Sargeant, Thomas Greaves, J. Penman, Thomas Longley, Jonathan Parkin, John Atkins, John Nelson, George Dermott, George Morley.

"I have my doubts that the alterations proposed will not be for the furtherance of the gospel.

"Samuel Bardsley.

"Nottingham, May the 27th, 1796.

"Sent by order of the meeting, T. Greaves, Secretary."

through the Connexion; whilst every thing that we have known, on a calm and unbiassed view of the parties concerned, and the circumstances existing, compels us to conclude, that one principal cause of these jealousies is owing to a want of fuller communication between the Circuits and Conference; and to a want of rules in some parts of our discipline, which might guard the whole Connexion from the improper influence of individuals." The following proposals were added for the consideration of Conference:—

1st. That an intercourse by delegates, or a public letter, subsist between the Circuits, Districts, and Conference.

2nd. That all our rules of discipline be so expressed, that no individual, or small number of individuals, may be the sole judges of the meaning of rules which affect the whole body—or be intrusted with a power to act in opposition to whole Societies and Circuits without controul.

3rd. That all our public accounts be kept in such a manner that individual characters may not easily be rendered suspicious.

4th. That the admission of local and travelling preachers among us may be manifestly attended with the sanction of numbers instead of individuals.

We are decidedly of opinion that our rules, on these subjects, as they now stand, are not sufficiently explicit, and that the want of something more explicit has occasioned so much contention.

We entreat the Conference, as they regard the peace of the Societies, to form some additional rules that will render the executive power more effectual.

Willing to contribute our mite to terminate the discords around us—we wait the reply of Conference to suggest any further particulars on these points.

Signed, by order of the meeting,

RICHARD SAUSE, CHAIRMAN.

THOMAS DAY, SECRETARY.

Subsequently, a memorial to Conference was agreed to by the deputation of trustees, containing the following propositions:—

1st. That no person be recommended to travel without the sanction of the leaders of the Society where he has lived, and the quarterly meetings.

2nd. That no preachers admit or exclude Members, Stewards, Leaders, or Local Preachers, in opposition to the judgment of a Leader's and Quarterly Meeting.

3rd. That no person be admitted into full Connexion to travel, till he has the approbation of the two last Quarterly Meetings in the Circuit where he labours, before the Conference.

4th. That all business (except stationing preachers) necessary to be transacted between the Circuits, Districts, and Conference, be done in a public general letter, the outlines of which to be drawn up by a Committee of Conference.

5th. That this be transmitted to the Districts and Conference, either by the preacher or a delegate, whichever is determined by a quarterly meeting.

6th. That delegates meet with the preachers in the district meetings and Conference.

7th. That all collections and public monies be entered into the Society books where they are made, and when they become Circuit collections, be transferred to the Circuit books ;—and that minute details of all public monies be communicated to the Societies.

The preceding are substantially what Mr. Kilham had been contending for ; and if Conference had been willing to concede these points, there would not have been any insuperable difficulty in adjusting all disputes in reference to him ; for it appears, throughout the whole of his conduct, that so far as regarded particular expressions, he had no objections to admit, that, in his maturer judgment, they were not the best which might have been chosen ; and that terms of too great severity were to be found in his writings.\* But though his language was taken hold of as a pretext for condemning

\* That too much censure may not be attached to Mr. Kilham on this subject, it is proper to observe,—1st. That in writing to and of each other, the preachers of that day were accustomed to adopt the plainest, and even most uncourteous style ; and in conveying blame, they often made use of terms which, if taken in a strict literal sense, would suppose them destitute of almost every thing morally good. But they had no intention of conveying such meaning, nor were their expressions so taken by those to whom they might be addressed ; a rigid interpretation of what they sometimes said, would, therefore, be unjust on the part of the reader ; and knowing this, as the Conference did, it cannot be believed that they really understood, when they condemned Mr. Kilham, that he had written every word as a mere philologist, and nothing rhetorically,

him, the principles of constitutional liberty which he inculcated were what his opponents really disliked, and which they were determined, if possible, to put down. The state of affairs was such, that Conference found itself obliged to do one of two things—either to let the people participate in the government of the Connexion, or to take some step which might have the effect of causing them to desist from claiming this privilege. The leading preachers being unwilling to part with any of their authority, and regarding Mr. Kilham as the chief cause of the laity having claimed to exercise a voice in making and executing the laws of the community, it was resolved to try the experiment of deterring any of their own body from taking a similar course, by humbling him, and bringing him to acknowledge his conduct to have been wrong, accompanied by a solemn pledge not to repeat his advocacy of the people's rights—or, at all hazards, to expel him from the Connexion. He was accordingly cited to the bar of this Conference to take his trial, the particulars of which may now be given.

On the first day, Mr. Mather, with the sanction of

or according to the free use and loose application of expressions which then prevailed amongst themselves. 2nd. When Mr. Bradburn, Dr. Coke, Mr. Taylor, and others, had been opposed to Mr. Benson, Mr. Mather, &c., as in the Bristol dispute, they had said as severe things as any that are to be found in Mr. Kilham's publications; and which were far more personal in their application. In fact, it may be repeated, that in cases where only venial errors or mistakes were referred to, language highly criminatory was common—too common, in all their controversies. 3rd. As soon as Mr. Kilham saw that some of his expressions were taken hold of by his opponents, he at once admitted them to be objectionable, and made every concession which could be required of him. And as evidence of his sincerity in regretting this error, it may be stated that we have before us a copy of his *Progress of Liberty* where all such passages are expunged, and more appropriate terms, to which fastidious exceptions could not be taken, substituted in his own hand-writing. These corrections appear to have been made immediately after the pamphlet was first published, and they were probably intended to have been introduced in a future edition; but in consequence of the steps taken by the preachers, when Mr. Kilham republished the *Progress of Liberty* in the *Methodist Monitor*, it was printed verbatim according as it originally appeared, that the whole extent of his offence might be contrasted with the grievous charges made against, and the heavy penalty of expulsion which had been inflicted upon him.

the preachers, handed to Mr. Kilham the following questions, in writing, to which he returned the annexed replies immediately:—

Question 1. Do you acknowledge the pamphlet, entitled an Appeal to the Methodist Societies of the Alnwick Circuit, dated the 24th May, 1796?

Answer. I do.

Question 2. Do you intend to support the third paragraph in the first page of that pamphlet; which declares that "there are several parts of our plan both unscriptural and oppressive to the people?"

Answer. I desire time to consider.

Question 3. Do you intend to support the second paragraph in the second page of that pamphlet; declaring that "no government under Heaven, except an absolute monarchy, or a papal hierarchy, is so despotic and oppressive as ours," or words to that purport?

Answer. I desire time to consider.

Question 4. Do you intend to support the second paragraph in the third page of that pamphlet, which declares that "Priestcraft is the same in every sect and party," &c.; and do you mean to support this as our character, according to the implication of that paragraph?

Answer. I desire time to consider.

Question 5. How long have you been received into connexion?

Answer. I have travelled nearly twelve years.

Question 6. Did Mr. Wesley receive you into full connexion, and did he give you the Minutes of the Conference?

Answer. Mr. Wesley did receive me into full connexion, and, I think, did give me the Minutes of the Conference.

Question 7. Did you then promise and intend to support and execute those minutes and rules, as far as your situation enabled you?

Answer. I did, according to my knowledge of them.

Question 8. Will you abide by that engagement, or do you retract it?

Answer. I desire time to consider.

A Committee of the preachers was then appointed, to examine his recent writings, (for the enquiry was not confined to the Progress of Liberty,) and draw up a list of charges against him, founded on what were deemed the most objectionable passages they contained.



On Tuesday morning, Mr. Kilham delivered in his replies to such of the above questions as he had been allowed time to consider. A list of charges was then preferred against him, of which, for the purpose of preparing his defence, he earnestly entreated to be favoured with a copy; but this was repeatedly refused.\* He further made application, "in order that he might not

\* To the honour of one preacher, who afterwards became distinguished as the most learned individual whose name has ever been associated with Methodism—we refer to the late Dr. Adam Clarke—it should be recorded that, as an act of sheer justice, he urged on Conference to furnish the accused with a fair opportunity of justifying himself. Mr. Kilham says,—“Mr. Adam Clarke pleaded with the preachers for me to have an exact copy of the charges, as drawn up by committee, with time to make my defence. When he found they were determined to withhold it, he took me aside privately, and professed his love and tenderness for me, declaring, if I would give him a promise not to inform of what he should do (or words to that effect), he would mark all the places in the pamphlets that the charges alluded to. I gave him my promise, and he fulfilled his engagement.” For this information, Mr. Kilham was indebted to the favour of Dr. Clarke, and not to the justice of the Conference, which, by withholding what the veriest criminal is entitled to, and allowed to have in every court of law, did all it could to prevent him from making any reply to its accusations, except under the greatest disadvantage. But this is not all. When Mr. Kilham published an account of his trial and expulsion by Conference, and stated what was strictly true, that it had refused him a copy of the charges, Messrs. Mather and Pawson, in a publication which they entitled “An affectionate Address” to the Connexion, having by some means become acquainted with the circumstance of Dr. Clarke’s kindness to Mr. Kilham, insinuated that he had misrepresented the case in the following words:—“When he has so loudly complained of the injustice of the Conference in withholding a copy from him, he had the books marked, and put into his hands by a member of the Conference. In the name of all that is sacred, what has this wonderful reformer done with his conscience?” This is a striking instance how a true fact may be stated for the purpose of making a false impression. The intention of Messrs. Mather and Pawson in what they said, was unquestionably to have it believed that the “member of Conference” who gave Mr. Kilham a copy of the charges, did this *with the knowledge and under the direction of Conference*—which was contrary to the truth. In befriending Mr. Kilham, Dr. Clarke, under the impulse of his own sense of what was due to another, acted against the decision of the Conference, and in violation of its wish;—yet, when the injustice of Conference, in refusing to give a list of charges to an accused party, became known to the public, an unworthy attempt is made not only to appropriate to Conference the credit of an act of justice secretly done by an individual, contrary to its will, but to charge Mr. Kilham with a false statement! We regret to observe, this is not the only instance of the kind which might be given; and yet the parties conducting themselves in such an unfair manner, could express a concern to know what Mr. Kilham had “done with his conscience!”

be exposed to any thing which was contrary to the feelings of an Englishman," to be tried by a jury of respectable friends, one-half to be appointed by the Conference, and the other half by himself;\* and to have the investigation conducted in public, before the society in the New Chapel. To show that he had a right to have these requests granted, he read a few emphatic sentences from some remarks made by Dr. Coke, a few years before, in a dispute with the trustees on the state of Dewsbury meeting-house. "Has not every man," said the Dr., "a right to an impartial trial? And can that trial be impartial when the same persons are accusers, jury, judges, and executioners? Can any process be more absurd—more inconsistent with the essence of justice, than this? And can it be supposed that it ever could enter into the mind of so wise a man as Mr. Wesley to accede to a proposal so contrary to every idea of law and equity? And yet this is the very power which the trustees require!" Dr. Coke had affirmed, that in all his reading he had "never met such an instance of bare-faced tyranny and injustice, except in the histories of the Popish inquisition." Now, the power said to have been claimed by the Trustees, and so warmly denounced in this passage, Mr. Kilham contended was the self-same power about to be exercised in his case by Conference; and yet, he adds, "no sooner had I finished reading this excellent passage, than the Conference immediately became my accusers, jury, judges,

\* Had Conference been disposed to have complied with this request, there was the fullest opportunity of doing impartial justice in his case, a number of trustees and of the most respectable lay individuals in the Connexion, being present in London. It could have been arranged for a committee, composed of preachers and trustees, in equal numbers, to have investigated his conduct, and given in a written report or opinion respecting it to Conference; and it might have passed judgment upon him accordingly. But this would have been virtually committing Mr. Kilham into the hands of parties who would decide his case on its merits, "without fear, favour, or affection," which might have frustrated the intentions of the leading preachers respecting him. His proposal to be tried by an unprejudiced and disinterested jury was, therefore, treated by them as preposterous. They had him in their power, and determined to run no risk of losing their hold, by entrusting him, even in part, to others.

and, in due time, my executioners!" The preachers, in short, refused to grant any of the requests above stated.

It was then argued by some of the brethren, that—as Mr. Kilham had stood up, at that Conference, with the other preachers, to declare, first, that "they engaged to follow strictly the plan which Mr. Wesley left them at his death;" and, second, that "they were unanimously determined to abide by the large Minutes of the Conference, in every thing which respected doctrine and discipline contained therein,"—he had, by giving this sign of assent, recanted all his late publications. To this Mr. Kilham replied, that he had, in a pamphlet signed Paul and Silas, published in the preceding year, shown that Mr. Wesley, at his death, left them to follow the openings of Providence; and that, as to the Minutes, he meant, by standing up, to imply that he agreed thereto so far as they were consistent with the Scriptures. A good deal was said to induce him to promise that he would conform to them without putting in any conditions; and Mr. Benson having, among others, pressed him to adopt that course, he referred that gentleman to the following remarks contained in his (Mr. B.'s) answer to Dr. Tatham:—

"No creeds, confessions of faith, or articles of religion, are further to be regarded than they can be proved by the Scriptures, the only rule, and the sufficient rule, of both faith and practice. And with regard to this, every individual must examine and judge for himself, calling no man, let his abilities or integrity be what they may, Master, or Father, on earth; and crediting no man's doctrine further than it is, in his judgment, proved from Scripture;—in his judgment, I say; for as every man must give an account of himself to God, so must every one judge for himself."

On this being read, Mr. Kilham remarks,—“Mr. Benson seemed a good deal confused while I referred to this passage; and when I was reminding him of his own words, Mr. Bradburn smiled and sat down. Perhaps he thought I should be quoting a few passages from his own excellent sermon on Equality. The subject

was immediately changed, and other things occupied our attention."

These preliminaries having been settled, the Conference came to their first charge. It originally stood thus:—

"He charges the preachers with want of abilities for the work they have undertaken."

But, after the trial, in the account which was published of it at the instance of Conference, it was inserted:—

"Mr. Kilham has advanced, that many of the local and travelling preachers want abilities for the work in which they are engaged."

The passage on which this charge is founded, is in the Progress of Liberty, page 30, and is as follows:—  
 "Are there not many local, not to say travelling preachers, who cannot explain to the satisfaction of any sensible Christian, a number of doctrines which are essential to our salvation?" Mr. Kilham's object in making this remark, was to show that the practice of taking preachers on the plan, and to travel, on the single authority of a circuit preacher, and without the suffrages of the society or quarterly meeting, had a tendency to introduce into the ministry incompetent persons; who, by obtaining the patronage, by whatever means, of a superintendent, might thus get out to travel. It was notorious that many very poor preachers had been introduced into the Connexion in this way; yet Mr. Bradburn solemnly declared he did not know any travelling or local preacher who was unable satisfactorily to explain the doctrines of the gospel: and Mr. Kilham, (after significantly asking Mr. B. if that was according to what he had formerly said on the same subject) proceeded to enquire whether this passage charged the preachers at large (as set forth by the Conference on the trial) as men wanting in abilities for their work? Its words were—"Are there not many local, not to say travelling preachers," &c.; and he felt certain that thousands would be ready to answer in the affirmative, from their own knowledge, without at all impugning the abilities

of the preachers as a body. The fact, he said, was so well known, that he declined mentioning names to substantiate his assertion, as it was unnecessary to do so.

The second charge was, "that Mr. Kilham had accused the preachers with being guilty of spiritual tyranny;" which was partly founded on the following sentence quoted by the preachers from the Progress, p. 19:—"We detest the conduct of persecuting Neros, and all the bloody actions of the great whore of Babylon, and yet, in our measure, we tread in their steps."

On this allegation, thus supported, being read, Mr. Kilham asked if it were generous of the brethren to choose a detached sentence in a paragraph to suit their purpose, when they were convinced the whole of it would make against them? If quoted at all, it ought surely to have been accompanied by that portion of the context which immediately related to it, and which modified the aspect of the paragraph in a material degree. In its entire state, the passage is as follows:—

"Is it not amazingly strange, that any sect or party should refuse to give to their brethren what the laws of our country so cheerfully allow? Is it not cruelty and persecution to restrict one another in those things which are not essential to the salvation of the soul? Does not every man that would force his brother to any modes of worship against his own mind, act the part of a spiritual tyrant, and lord it over God's heritage? We detest the conduct of persecuting Neros, and all the bloody actions of the great whore of Babylon, and yet, in our measure, we tread in their steps. If a man of any sect or party should force his creed of faith upon us, and constrain us to worship in his way, contrary to our will, or prevent us from worshipping according to the convictions of our own mind, he is a Nero to us—a true son of the great whore of Babylon."

Other passages were quoted from his Examination of the London Methodistical Bull, from his Short Account of the District Meeting Trials, &c. to sustain this charge; for further answer to which he referred the Conference to the written paper which he had delivered in reply to their former questions. The annexed is a copy of this document:—

**Question.** "Do you support the third paragraph, in the first page of that pamphlet [called *An Appeal to the Methodist Societies in the Alnwick circuit*,] which declares that there are several parts of our plan, both unscriptural and oppressive to the people."

**Answer.** According to my judgment, after all that Messrs. Benson, Mather, Pawson, and Crowther have said, our people are "ruled without being consulted," as it refers to "the choice of their own officers, the formation of their own laws, and the distribution of their own collections." What is mentioned in the second page of that pamphlet, according to my views of the subject, is fairly deducible from our present plan. "1. An assistant preacher has power, with the help of a single leader, to receive or exclude members into or from the society, without the knowledge or consent of the people. 2. He can alone place or displace leaders, stewards, or local preachers. 3. He can of himself, without consulting any of the preachers that are travelling with him, recommend persons and get them placed among the travelling preachers. 4. He can make all the collections, such as yearly, Kingswood school, and preachers' fund, without being obliged to give a single individual any account of what he has received, till he come to the Conference. 5. The preachers in the Conference make laws for the people without consulting them, and transact all the affairs of the Connexion, without the people having a single voice or representative in the assembly, 6. All the collections are disbursed by the preachers alone, and the expenditure is only published in gross sums, which prevents the people from knowing how the money is applied. This is the case with them all, except the preachers' fund collection."

After examining the subject on every side, I am obliged to own, that whatever respect is paid to general custom, our present plan of discipline admits of every thing I have named. Those passages of scripture which inform us that christians are brethren—that ministers are not lords over God's heritage, but ensamples to the flock—that they are the servants of the people for Christ's sake—according to my judgment, militate against our present plan. And it is my opinion, our Lord's words, "do unto others, as ye would that they should do unto you," are against our present mode of government. Acts vi. 1—6, and the xv. 22, 23. and the xvi. 2. with 1 Tim. iii. 10, according to the commentaries of Messrs. Poole, Henry, Doddridge, Wesley, &c. "which clearly

prove that the primitive christians were virtually consulted in these things ; and that ministers in all ages ought to consult their people in them." Where preachers avail themselves of the liberty our plan admits of, and appoint leaders, stewards, local preachers, &c. to their office, without consulting either the people at large, or the present leaders and stewards, I think their conduct is unscriptural ; and as our system of rules does not bind a preacher to consult the people, whatever may be said respecting general custom, I consider it in these things as not founded on the scriptures.

It appears to me to be oppressive to the society. Is it not oppressive to any body of people to have members received to, or excluded from them, without their knowledge or consent ? And may not this be done among us by a single preacher, in conjunction with a leader ? If general custom were converted into positive law, this, perhaps, would not be the case. 2. Is it not oppressive to have leaders, stewards, and local preachers, appointed to their office by the [travelling] preachers alone, should they avail themselves of the liberty our plan allows ? General custom will admit of this. 3. Is it not oppressive to have preachers appointed to travel, without their knowledge or consent ? Was not this done last year in several instances ? Does not general custom admit of it ? 4. Have not the Conference power to form and execute what laws they please for the people, without consulting them ; and is not this oppressive ? 5. Have not the preachers power to receive and disburse collections of themselves, and is there no oppression in this ? When any persons are told, if they do not approve of a discipline that admits of such things, they may leave us, is there nothing oppressive in the idea of either leaving the people they sincerely love, or of submitting to several things which are grievous to them, according to their present views of our economy ?

Question. "Do you intend to support the second paragraph of the second page of that pamphlet 'declaring that no government under heaven, except absolute monarchies, or the papal hierarchy, are so despotic and oppressive as our's is ?'"

Answer. These words are connected with the six particulars I have quoted above : and they refer entirely to our plan of discipline. I do not mean by these expressions, 1. That the Methodist preachers are like the rulers of absolute

monarchies and the papal hierarchy, as it refers to their life and conversation. 2. Nor that they have intentions to enslave and oppress their followers, as those governments do. 3. Nor do I mean, that, had they equal civil power with them, they would use it in the same way.

If I understand absolute monarchies and the papal hierarchy, our government bears some resemblance to them in the following particulars: 1. The rulers in them have power to make laws, for themselves or the people, without their knowledge or consent. 2. They can abrogate, alter, or suspend laws at their pleasure, without consulting the people. 3. They can create new offices and places of themselves. 4. If they consult with their people, they have power to act independently of them. 5. They can prevent the people, by their representatives, from having any access to their councils, or grand assemblies. 6. They can levy taxes and expend the money, without being accountable to any for their conduct. 7. They can prevent free enquiry, and keep the people ignorant of many things, which are of great importance to them. 8. They can arraign, accuse, try, cast, condemn, as well as execute any of their brethren in office, without the interference of the people. 9. They can force the inhabitants to submit to their rules, or leave the country, and seek refuge in other nations.

Now I ask, do we not, in some measure, resemble them in these particulars? Cannot we make laws for ourselves and our followers, without their having a single representative in our Conferences? Cannot we abrogate, alter, or suspend our laws, at our pleasure, without consulting the different societies? Cannot we elect and appoint new officers in our Connexion? And, were we disposed to do it, could we not make new places for new orders of officers? If we consult with our people, have we not a power to act independently of them, in a number of things? Cannot we prevent the leaders, or any representatives of the people, from having access to our district meetings, and to the Conference? Cannot we appoint collections and disburse the money, without consulting our followers, or giving them an account in detail, of what we receive and distribute? Cannot we, in a great measure, prevent free enquiry, and in consequence of this, keep our people ignorant of many things which concern their welfare? Have we not power to arraign, accuse, try, cast, condemn, and execute judgment upon each other, without the interference of the societies? Cannot we compel the



people to submit to laws that are made by us alone every year, or force them to leave the Connexion?—Viewing our plan of discipline, as bearing some resemblance to these oppressive governments, in this light, I was led to conclude the paragraph alluded to by asking, can it be supposed that a system of this nature would never be abused to the reproach of our Connexion? Does it not open a way for men to act tyrannically and dishonestly? Is it not calculated to create jealousies and distrust in our leading men? And if it be continued, will it not soon destroy itself? Is it not the duty of every sincere lover of Methodism to seek to have it removed, and a better established?"

Question. "Do you intend to support the second paragraph in the third page of that pamphlet, which declares, that priestcraft is the same in every sect and party. It loves to deal with ignorance and credulity. It abhors the light, and ever strives to keep its votaries from free enquiry? And do you mean to support this as our character, according to the implication of that paragraph?"

Answer. The words this question refers to are a general maxim, which I never thought of applying to the Conference as it now stands. All I mean by it is this. If we, as a body of preachers, conform to maxims of this nature in any respect, so far as we act in conformity to them, we are under the influence of principles that cannot be justified.

In his published account of his trial, Mr. Kilham said he would ask the candid and impartial, after reading the above document, to decide whether there was no spiritual tyranny among the Methodists; and whether he had not proved sufficient to show that he had committed no offence under this second charge for which nothing short of his expulsion would atone?—It may be remarked here, that the Conference had, after considering the answers just referred to, judged them "to be no answers at all, but merely a repetition of what he had advanced before in his pamphlets." It is the province of the reader to judge between Mr. Kilham and his accusers, and to say whether his account, or this declaration, be best supported by evidence.

The next accusation,—“That Mr. Kilham had charged the preachers with immorality,” was embodied

in the following particulars:—1, That the preachers had imposed upon the people, by bringing out improper persons from selfish motives; 2, That they made only mock examinations into each other's characters; 3, That they had wasted the public money; 4, That they had been guilty of swindling; 5, That they had been guilty of criminal secrecy in transacting their business.

The 1st of these Articles, as they were called, was grounded upon Mr. Kilham having, in the Progress of Liberty, attempted to show that, at that time, the mode of bringing out persons to travel admitted of great abuses; and that while the people were not allowed to have a voice in the matter, very improper persons might be taken out every year, through interested motives on the part of the preachers. In confirmation of this, he mentioned at the trial several individuals who had been brought out to travel since the death of Mr. Wesley under such circumstances; and offered to prove his statements by the Minutes for the last 4 years, if allowed to examine them—which, however, was refused. If, he then observed, he had used strong expressions on the subject, it was with the design to stimulate the preachers and the people to unite in establishing a plan of positive laws, which would not admit of an individual bringing out improper persons to travel. He doubted whether there was a leader's or quarterly meeting that could not come forward and substantiate before the world what he had stated.

As to No. 2, which charged him with saying the preachers connived at a system of mock examination into their own characters, the Conference referred to the first sentence of the paragraph on page 38 of the Progress, viz.,—"Our present mode of examining each other's characters, only makes sensible people laugh at us." There they stopped, and declined stating that the paragraph proceeded to argue, that those chiefly were called on to answer as to the conduct of their brethren, who lived at a distance so remote from them, that in all probability they did not see each other from

Conference to Conference, and knew nothing of their conduct, unless it had been grossly and notoriously immoral; while others, living on the spot, and belonging to the Societies, who could have given correct information, were never consulted, either personally or by delegation. There were no rules which required the characters of preachers to be examined in quarterly or district meetings, but only by those who could not be well acquainted with them;—and had he not, then, he begged to ask, sufficient reason for declaring, that all the examinations into character taken in Conference, without the people having a single voice by themselves or their representatives, were mock examinations? Mr. Kilham then offered to prove, that in certain districts where he had been, many of the friends had considered this mode of examination in no other light than as a solemn farce: and to exemplify his meaning, as well as to establish what he said, he mentioned that, in some places, preachers had been at variance for several months before Conference, and had each said very unchristian things respecting his opponent;—but, when they met annually in that assembly, they had no charge to prefer against each other, though no reconciliation had taken place in the meantime. These statements, however, the Conference did not require him to substantiate.

In reference to the charge of wasting the public money, Mr. Kilham entered into some details to show that this had been the case in such instances as the following,—Preachers attending Conference who had no business to transact, and who were excluded by the rules of the former Conference; leaving their horses behind them, and travelling by coach; riding inside of coaches, when they might have travelled outside; removals of families, sometimes to places 3 or 400 miles distant from their previous residences. Of the three former allegations, he was not required to offer any proof, for, he says, the preachers knew they were too self-evident to require examination; and as to the 4th, respecting long removals, he showed that such had taken place in journeys from Liverpool to London, from London by land to Dundee, from Lancaster to Aberdeen, &c.

Was he not justified, therefore, asked Mr. Kilham, in declaring that much public money had been wasted every year by the four things which he had mentioned? And would the people, did they think, join in the judgment of Conference, that he was highly criminal for declaring such to have been the fact?

The next charge, under this head, was that of swindling. This was certainly an objectionable word to have used; but Mr. Kilham offered a good deal of evidence to show that transactions had taken place, particularly in the purchase and sale of horses, which might, he contended, be characterised as deserving of that epithet. The want of a better plan of economy, he said, opened a way for designing persons to act contrary to the gospel,—every Assistant, for instance, had the power to conceal from the people what he received in the collections which were carried to Conference; and he might be dishonest if he pleased, without any person being able to detect him. It could not, now, serve any good purpose to repeat here the cases of which he went into particulars to confirm what is above alleged,—which he himself cited rather to show what might take place under the system which then existed, and the necessity of having it reformed, than for the purpose of bringing individual cases into notice. But after the proofs he had tendered, he could not help expressing his surprise that the Conference should persist in saying he had not substantiated his charge.—Under this article, Mr. Kilham was also accused of having unfairly and unjustly obtained a letter, written by Mr. Rodda to Mr. Mather, intimating, among other matters, his fears for the recovery of some of the public money. Mr. Kilham explained, that a friend of his, Mr. Heamer of Manchester, found, in the Vestry-room of Salford chapel, a paper, unsealed, and hardly looking like a letter, on perusing which he instantly saw the importance of the matter which it contained, and sent it to Mr. K., in order that its contents might be considered, and brought forward, if necessary, in his defence. Mr. Kilham offered to give the letter up to the President, without reading it; but

a majority of the preachers would have it read.\* Upon Mr. K. mentioning that the letter had fallen providentially into his hands, one of the older preachers declared it was a devilish providence that had brought it to him; and Mr. Bradburn said, every thing that had been alleged against him was trifling, in comparison to the manner in which he had obtained that letter.

Lastly, as to the charge of secrecy in money matters (for Mr. Kilham denied their right to use the word "criminal," which he had never employed), he showed that several sums for travelling expenses and removal of families had been set down at considerably beneath their actual amount; and enquired, if any of the people, or even the preachers, knew how much money the book room brought in, or what it was applied to; or how much the London law-suit cost, when they had to pay the expenses on both sides? The charge of secrecy, he maintained, could not be denied; but it amounted to nothing more than a want of publication by the preachers of their expenditure in detail, so that the

\* Mr. Kilham, in his account of the trial, gives the following particulars of this very curious letter:—"Mr. Rodda was severe upon me in the first page, and quoted the words of Job on the occasion: 'But now those that are younger than I have me in derision—whose fathers I would have scorned to have set with the dogs of my flock.' He told Mr. Mather, that several of the preachers that signed the London Bull have been deeply impressed for some time with many fears lest they should soon have to take their farewell of Primitive Methodism. He then asked him, in words to this effect, 'what would a K—— [that is a Kilham] say if he knew that Dr. C—— and H. M—— took eighteen guineas at a time out of the book money, against the consent of the book committee, when they had been remonstrated with by Mr. Creighton, Mr. Bradburn, and myself, at the time I was a member of that committee? Or of J. Rogers secreting the deed of the goods of the house in London, from the gentlemen whose names were at it? Or of the late peculation in the Kingswood money?' He adds, 'If Mr. Mather had been at the helm, [that is, if he had filled Mr. Wesley's place] he would not have suffered such things to have passed unnoticed.' In this letter, Mr. Rodda also observes,—'The day you stood upon your feet in the Conference, and did not use them, in the quick or slow march, you might say in the evening,—my friends I have lost a day.' That is, Mr. Mather lost a day when he did not divide the Connexion into two parts. Lastly, Mr Rodda declares that Methodism is near to its *Ne plus ultra*—is likely to be broken into a thousand pieces, &c. In the Conference," adds Mr. Kilham, "Dr. Coke and Mr. Henry Moore, explained their matter respecting the eighteen guineas. J.

different societies might judge how far their collections were properly applied; and he declared that it never was his intention to charge the preachers with criminal secrecy in any such respect, nor had he used the word "criminal" in this matter.

The 4th general charge was, that he had published, in his tracts, paragraphs highly derogatory to the character of Mr. Wesley. A number of passages were cited on the trial in proof of this, of which perhaps the following, from Mr. Kilham's Appeal to the Societies of the Alnwick Circuit, page 1, may suffice:—

"When he (Mr. Wesley) was called to his reward, the preachers did not enter upon a particular examination of his plan, but took it up, and adopted his laws

Rogers' business was never examined.—The peculation of the Kingswood money I at first considered could not be brought to any bearing, but circumstances were subsequently brought forward which placed the subject in a different light."

What Mr. Rodda, in his letter referred to, calls the Kingswood "peculation" was the deficiency of eighty pounds from the collections which had been made for the support of Kingswood school. Mr. Pawson declared that he had paid the full amount at Conference to Mr. Bradburn, who denied receiving more than he had accounted for, which was £80 short of the whole sum collected. What became of this money was never ascertained; but the circumstance showed that the pecuniary transactions of the Connexion were not always executed with perfect accuracy, which was one of the things affirmed by Mr. Kilham—and which formed one of the charges preferred against him at his trial.

Mr. Rodda's letter to Mr. Mather had an important bearing on Mr. Kilham's case, inasmuch as it shewed that while the leading preachers were charging him with slandering them and the Connexion, by falsely representing the money matters as improperly conducted, his very accusers, in their correspondence with each other, were admitting and complaining of the identical evils which he reprobated. When Mr. Heamer,—who picked up this unsealed letter, in the chapel vestry at Salford, in the way above mentioned,—found he had the means of enabling Mr. Kilham to justify his own statements under the hand of his accusers,—who at the same time became convicted of exceedingly unfair conduct towards him,—he considered himself warranted, under the circumstances, in handing over the letter to Mr. Kilham. Whether Mr. Heamer was correct or not in this view, is immaterial, so far as Mr. Kilham is concerned, who, we do not hesitate to maintain, had the most perfect right, situated as he then was, both to receive this letter, and to make such use of it as his own defence required. If what Mr. Rodda wrote were true, it established Mr. Kilham's case; and he was entitled to have Mr. Rodda as a witness in his favour: and as he did not come forward, openly and voluntarily, to state what he knew of the conduct of the preachers in respect of pecuniary affairs, Mr. Kilham, for the purposes of justice, was authorized to bring him into court by any means which might be in his power,

and rules, as he left them. It cannot be supposed that Mr. Wesley, who travelled about four thousand miles every year, and preached so very often, would closely attend to a well-organized form of church government for his people after his decease. When individuals began to examine different parts of our plan, they found several things in it both oppressive and unscriptural."

It will be recollected that a similar accusation, and on similar grounds, was preferred against Mr. Kilham, at the Conference, 1792, by Dr. Coke, the particulars of which, and Mr. Kilham's defence, have been given in a previous chapter. (See page 157, &c.)

In reply to this repetition of the charge, Mr. Kilham introduced the following considerations to Conference :—1. Mr. Wesley never professed himself to be infallible. He often declared how frail and weak he was. 2. He often called upon the people that heard him, not to receive even what he delivered, without examining it by the word of God. 3. As he wrote his sermons and other things in haste, it could not be supposed that he could so strictly attend to every thing, as he would have done, had he had more time. If passages might be found in his notes, sermons, and other writings, which cannot be reconciled to the scriptures, such is what might be expected from a person in his situation, and what sensible readers can pass over without censuring his character. 4. He considered himself as the father of his people, and thought he had a right to make laws, and govern, as the head of the Connexion. 5. He was frequently imposed upon, by different persons, and was led to accept of men to travel in the Connexion, who were a reproach to the cause. 6. In the latter part of his life, he employed a few persons, who were like a privy council to him: from the year 1784, when the Deed of Declaration was made, appointing one hundred preachers to be the Conference, to the time of his death, many rules and laws were made, which could not with propriety be imputed to him. They were the laws and rules of the preachers acting as a privy council. 7. The people in general cheerfully submitted to his government

while he lived, but expected, after his death, many alterations would take place in their favour. 8. Mr. Wesley never expected that the societies would submit to the preachers as they had done to him. What was with pleasure conformed to under his government, when claimed by the Conference as its right, without the consent of the people, became of consequence, unscriptural and oppressive. 9. And for the present Methodist preachers to wish to have the same dominion over the different societies that Mr. Wesley had, without their consent, appeared to him exceedingly unjust. 10. He referred to pages 9, 10, 11, and 12 of the *Progress of Liberty*, for his account of Mr. Wesley's character.—He intreated the Conference to examine that account, and not take detached passages, to make him guilty of a crime which his soul abhorred. "But" says Mr. Kilham, "they knew too well, if that account of Mr. Wesley were examined by our people, it would entirely defeat the end they had in view, in producing these detached passages, and calling them, when collected, a charge 'highly injurious to our late venerable father in the gospel.'" According to my judgment, all things considered, even in the detached paragraphs they have quoted, I have not 'said any thing derogatory to Mr. Wesley's character.' And I cannot suppose myself 'highly criminal,' for what I have published of him."

In reply to the 5th charge, "that he had been guilty of indecent and slanderous language," Mr. Kilham at once admitted that upon different parts of their economy he had expressed himself with a great deal of warmth, particularly in exposing the rules of the preachers' fund. He acknowledged that all such epithets were unjustifiable; professed his sorrow for them; and asked the preachers' pardon.

The preceding are all the charges that were brought against Mr. Kilham by the Conference, according to the account which he published of the trial—from the beginning to the end of which, he protested against the constitution of the court by which he was condemned. At the same time, he was ready to own that, according to its nature and tendency, the



Conference treated him with respect, and that his examination was as fair as the inquisitorial character of such a court would admit.

The Conference was occupied during the whole of Tuesday, the second day, with the above charges; and on Wednesday they were re-discussed until 11 o'clock A. M., when Mr. Kilham was desired to withdraw, while the evidence was summed up against him.\* The particulars of the succeeding transactions will be best gathered from his letters to the President of the Conference, and his own published statements of intervening circumstances. On Thursday morning, he sent a letter to Mr. Taylor, President, of which the subjoined are the principal paragraphs:—

DEAR SIR,

I hope you will be so kind as to read to the preachers the following:—When I was called to your bar on Monday morning, and received a number of questions in writing to answer, I exceedingly rejoiced; hoping that I should have a fair trial. But, on my returning a written answer to those questions, on Tuesday morning, I soon perceived that a fair

\* The reader who understands how judicial enquiries are conducted in this country, cannot fail to be as much astonished that Mr. Kilham was not allowed to be present when the evidence was summed up, as he must have been when the Conference refused a copy of the charges preferred against him. The verdict of a jury must always very materially depend on the recapitulation of the evidence, and the judge's comments thereon, which immediately precede it; and if there be one period more than another, during the trial of an accused party in a court of justice, in which he would not on any account be absent, it is when the summing up takes place. All men are liable to err; and a single misapprehension of a party's testimony may impart an unfavourable complexion to the whole case. During this process, indeed, the judge is always watched to the very syllable, in order that no erroneous colouring may be given to the evidence; and counsel for the defence have repeatedly been known to set judges right when they have misunderstood what has been stated. And yet, not only was Mr. Kilham required to be absent during the summing up of his case—which lasted from eleven o'clock in the morning till five in the afternoon—but no person whatever was present in his behalf, so that any unfair advantage might be taken both of whatever slips were made by himself, and of any misconceptions on the part of others, which the accused, had he been there, might have set right in a moment; and, what looks still worse as to the character of the proceedings, the preachers present were required sacredly to promise not to divulge any thing that transpired during all this time, until the injunction of secrecy was taken off them.

trial could not be obtained. It appeared extremely unreasonable to me to be called to your bar to answer charges which I had no previous knowledge of, without having a single advocate among you to plead my cause; but as this was your will, I was obliged to submit. After you had spent the whole of Tuesday in bringing charges against me, debating upon them, and taking down short notes of what passed upon each, I hoped you would have cheerfully given me a copy of the whole, when it was completed. Yesterday morning, I entreated you to give me a copy of the particulars you had drawn up the day before, and to allow me a few hours' retirement, that I might give you a written answer to them; but this equitable request you refused to comply with; and began immediately to read over the list a second time, that new observations might be made upon it. When you had finished the second reading, without giving me a copy of the improved list, you desired me to retire, that you might sum up the evidence, and come to a conclusion. On that part of the trial which most concerned me, you would neither allow me to be present, nor have an advocate in your assembly; but made every preacher stand up and pledge himself before God, neither to tell me, nor any other person without doors, what passed in the debates, till the restraint should in some future period be taken off. From eleven o'clock in the morning, till five in the evening, you had this business entirely to yourselves; at that hour I was called like a criminal to your bar, not to hear your debates, and the evidence summed up, but to receive sentence of expulsion. It was with difficulty I prevailed on you to read over those charges which you grounded my expulsion upon; and, when you put off confirming the sentence till four o'clock this afternoon, you refused to give me a copy of the particulars you had collected, with your remarks and resolves upon them:—I pledged myself not to copy a line of them, but to return the whole exactly as I received them. I wanted them, that I might weigh each particular in my closet before God, and make every concession I possibly could on my appearance at your bar this afternoon; but you determinately refused to comply with my request.

As far as you have convinced me that I have erred, so far I have frankly owned my offence, and asked your pardon. Two things I have cheerfully acknowledged: 1. That in my warmth I have made use of several expressions which

cannot be justified : 2. That a few of the accounts I have published, respecting the persons that receive from our funds, are not correct. Only produce evidence of my guilt on any of the charges I have not acknowledged, and, if you require it, I will publicly ask your pardon in the New Chapel. If you will suffer your charges, after I have animadverted in writing upon them, to be laid before a jury of the friends that are now in London (you choosing one-half of the number, and I the other), their determination shall be final. If you refuse this proposal, I have nothing further to add upon the subject. I particularly request, that you will inform me in writing, when I appear at your bar, this afternoon, by what law of the bible—of justice—of the nation—or of Conference, you try and expel me? Do you expel me in the first place, for immorality? or, secondly, for preaching erroneous doctrines? or, thirdly, for want of abilities for the work I have engaged in? or, lastly, for want of diligence and faithfulness in the work? If these things are not the cause, tell me honestly when I appear before you.

There are two things which will follow my expulsion. 1. Irreparable injury to my character throughout these nations. 2. Considerable loss to myself or family. I have subscribed eleven years to the preachers' fund; and, according to its rules, whoever you choose to expel, loses the advantage of it. Will you abide by the consequences of my expulsion? If I cannot have justice done by you, cannot I have it by putting my cause into the hands of those that have it in their power to see the injured righted? And, should you go to extremities, my character and property may both be secured by the laws of our land.

I am sorry that you should so industriously labour to persuade the people where you go, that I cannot make good any of the charges I have brought against the persons alluded to. Some of the particulars which you have selected from my pamphlets, and called charges, are no charges; others are only made such by your inferences. If you will give me a copy of the particulars you have collected, I pledge myself to justify every thing I have asserted (except in those instances where I have made concessions, and asked your pardon,) to the satisfaction of every impartial reader. Only forbear the shouts of victory, till our people have a fair opportunity of examining both sides, and then let the event determine whether you or I have the most cause to triumph.

Earnestly entreating the God of glory to direct your steps aright in this matter, I am,

Your affectionate servant,

ALEX. KILHAM.

*Wood Street, 28th July, 1796.*

Mr. Kilham then, addressing his readers, proceeds to say,—“At four o’clock, I appeared again at the bar of Conference. I requested to know what answers they designed to return to the questions proposed, in the letter they received from me in the morning? The President informed me it had been read, but that the brethren did not think it required any answer. He then, after a few more remarks, pronounced the sentence, in words to this effect: ‘You, Mr. Alexander Kilham, are judged to be unworthy of a place in this body; and, therefore, I now inform you, that you are no longer a member of it, but are expelled from the Connexion.’ After two of them had prayed, they offered to return what I had subscribed to the preachers’ fund: but I informed them, that I should advise with my friends, before I received it; and it was probable I should apply some other way for it.”

“The same day, they had a short letter prepared to circulate through the nation, in case I did not make suitable acknowledgment of my offences, and engage to renounce what I had published. When I appeared at their bar and received the final sentence of expulsion, the preachers did it by their President, with all the gloom and silence of an Inquisition. To make my expulsion secure, it was not only confirmed by the preachers standing up, and unanimously agreeing to it, but every person was required to sign a paper with his own hand, of the justness and uprightness of their proceedings in that matter. The paper was taken to the communion table, and laid on the place where the memorials of the body and blood of Christ are presented every sabbath day; and Mr. Bradburn, (I cannot relate the tragical story without weeping,) who had formerly professed himself a friend to liberty and the rights of the people,—Mr. Bradburn, I say, stood

by the rails of the Lord's table, like the governor of an Inquisition, to see that all his brethren signed. Here we find about 150 preachers of the gospel of Christ, confirming the sentence of condemnation, in a way unheard of in the records of Methodism, if not in the records of ecclesiastical history. This is a sufficient proof, that the leading men in that process considered what I had written (to enlighten and save our people from many evils that they groan beneath) as worse than any crime that had ever been examined in any former Conference. The letter they had prepared was instantly circulated. That night it was sent off by post to many places. After attacking the passions of the people, by a new account of my having injured the character of Mr. Wesley, they complain of my behaving with levity before them. Perhaps this will not appear in such a detestable light, when my readers are informed of the cause of my smiling. Soon after my examination was entered upon, a dispute took place among the preachers to know whether I was trying them, or they were trying me. Many arguments were brought forward that I was their judge, and they were criminals before me. After a long dispute on the subject, a great majority of the Conference determined the point, and solemnly declared, I was trying them. This was so curious, since I was arraigned and brought from Alnwick, in Northumberland, on purpose to be tried by them, that I could not help smiling. I told several of the preachers, if I were trying them, they ought to let me sit in the President's chair. The dispute was resumed the next day. Dr. Coke could not be reconciled to the idea of my trying them, when it was to be printed, and the people knew they had been trying me; therefore he altered the expression, and called the passages they had collected, charges against me."

"Every day during the Conference, several of the preachers urged me to acknowledge my offences, and to return to them with suitable penitence. But my constant answer was this,—I will cheerfully confess any thing you shall convince me is wrong, but I cannot play

the hypocrite, and feign myself sorrowful, when I feel a contrary principle in my heart."

Though Mr. Kilham's expulsion was one incidental cause of a separation from the Methodist body, he gave every proof that could be required, that no such occurrence formed any part of his plan; nor, indeed, did the separation take place until twelve months had elapsed after his trial, and when every hope of an effectual reform had been extinguished. But as his opponents had repeatedly, both before and at the time of his examination, insinuated it to be his intention to divide the Connexion, he deemed it proper to refute the imputation officially, in a letter to the President of Conference, immediately after the sentence had been pronounced against him. A portion of this letter may properly be inserted:—

To Mr. Thomas Taylor, President of the Conference.

DEAR SIR,

*London, 5th August, 1796.*

You will greatly oblige me, by reading the following lines to the preachers, and returning me their answer, as soon as it is convenient.

Ever since I came out to travel, I never had the least desire to leave the Connexion, but wished to spend and be spent in the work of the ministry. The circuits where I have travelled can bear witness, that I have not only endeavoured to preach according to the regular plan, but to publish the good tidings of salvation in many new places.

When I heard that my pamphlets had given great offence to many of the preachers, and that my expulsion was deemed necessary on that account, many can testify, that I always declared, should that be the case, I had no intention of attempting to head a party, or joining immediately any community of dissenters. It has been my fixed opinion for several months, and continues the same at this moment, that the preachers will in due time be convinced I am neither a secret nor an open enemy to the cause of Methodism. If I have acted contrary to the views of many, it has been from conviction of the importance of the steps which I have taken. And if I have erred, it has been with a design to serve the Connexion at large. I have weighed all the charges brought against me with the greatest attention; and lest my own heart should deceive me, I have asked counsel of several

very respectable friends: but after all, I cannot, without sacrificing my own principles, make any other acknowledgments than I have already made to you in the Conference, and in writing. If I had different views, you may depend on it, I would cheerfully submit to their influence. It is probable, before another Conference return, our views on these subjects may be the same. We may then unite with thankfulness, to build the temple of the Lord together. You allege nothing against my moral character; yet you have cast me off, after allowing me one day to consider upon the subject.

But what I principally desire you to consider is this. If it were possible, I could wish to preach as much this year, as I have done in any former. But it is probable this cannot be allowed. I should, however, wish to spend every Sabbath, in publishing the Gospel of the grace of God.—I am determined still to consider myself a Methodist preacher, and am resolved, by the grace of God, for this year, to shew to the Connexion at large, that I have still the interests of Methodism at heart. In consequence of this (unless something very particular happen to alter my purpose) I shall join no sect or party of dissenters, but consider myself the friend of all.—Do you, my dear brethren, by expelling me from among yourselves, exclude me also from having a place among the local preachers? If this be the case, do you also expel me from the society? Or do you admit me to be a member of your community, and a local preacher? I shall wait your answer to this letter with a degree of anxiety, as a great deal depends on it to me and my family.

Praying that God may direct you in all things,

I remain, your affectionate servant,

ALEX. KILHAM.

It appears this communication to Conference was construed to be a step, on the part of Mr. Kilham, towards submission and reconciliation, which led to a deputation being appointed to meet him; but after an interview of some length, the terms required of him being equivalent to a recantation of what he had written against the absolute power exercised by the preachers, as well as a pledge not to agitate the question in future, Mr. Kilham finally declared that his understanding and his conscience alike prohibited him from acceding to any such conditions. The meeting

therefore ended, without having effected the object for which it was appointed; and all intercourse between Mr. Kilham and the Conference ceased from that time. In connection with the account of his trial, Mr. Kilham makes a number of remarks, a few of which may be quoted as particularly deserving of notice:—

“1. The preachers throughout the trial, carefully avoided attacking my principles. Though they threw out many hints of the absurdity of many things contained in the ‘*Outlines of a Constitution*’, yet they never attempted to confute them.

“2. If every thing I have been tried about had been found false, this would not have invalidated what has been advanced, upon the necessity of a better constitution being established among us.

“3. Every impartial reader will be convinced, that had my cause been as bad as the preachers have represented it to be, it would have been their wisdom to have tried me by a jury of the people, before the society; and then, had I been found guilty, they would have been blameless. By obstinately refusing an honourable trial, many suspicions are raised; and had I been ever so guilty, our sensible friends cannot be reconciled to such a process. Every man that values the privilege of an Englishman, must be dissatisfied with such a trial.”

In the prefatory note to his trial, Mr. Kilham says,—

“There are two things, which I beg the candid reader seriously to consider. 1. In all the pamphlets I have published this year, I have one object in view. That is, to show that our people live under an oppressive system of rules of discipline, which does not admit of their having any share in the government of the *Connexion*, but by the good will of an assistant; and this is not of necessity, but of choice in him. This is the object of my attack throughout the whole. And where I have introduced the character of different individuals, it has been with no other intention than to place in a strong point of view the necessity of a reform in our constitution. If this be kept in mind, every impartial reader will observe the design of my writing, and be



able to form a proper judgment of the steps which I have taken in this matter. 2. It appears to me, that those preachers who had the management of my trial, determined to keep my design (which was a general reform,) out of sight, and to accuse me upon detached and trivial parts of my writings. They were conscious, if the end I aimed at was always kept in view, the charges brought against me would be of little or no importance: but if this could be hid, and little things magnified into crimes, my condemnation and expulsion might be obtained. I shall conclude by observing,—the reader must not forget, that I was called to the bar of the Conference without the least knowledge of the charges they meant to prefer against me. And when they read what they called charges, I was required to answer immediately, and could not obtain liberty to examine them alone, and prepare my defence. Without a single advocate, I was obliged to give extemporaneous answers to any questions they were pleased to ask, or liable to be reproached for refusing. And it often happened, that five or six persons were speaking at once. Can it be supposed, that in a situation so extremely trying, I should always be ready to defend myself to advantage? Can it be imagined, that I should never be confused in a meeting of this nature? Would it not have been a great miracle to have made the best of my cause in that state? When these things are properly considered, the reader will be able to judge, how far the Conference had a right to declare, that I “was not able to substantiate a single charge.”

The following letter was written by Mr. Kilham at the time of his trial, to a friend in Manchester:—

*London, August 5th, 1796.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

You would learn from the printed letter, which was forwarded from Leeds, that my fate is fixed, and by other means you would see what is done. I have been waiting for a week for their account of the trial, but though it has been printed since Tuesday, they will not suffer one of them to be seen by me. I cannot tell what they mean by such measures, except they design to send them into the country

first, and then circulate them here, or are waiting to see whether I will repent and return. I have written my mind freely to them to day, but have not yet received their answer. This prevents me from going forward with the account of my trial. You will be kind enough to inform our friends of the cause, and assure them, if they think that I answered the charges of the Newcastle District, I can answer these with equal satisfaction to every unprejudiced mind. If they will only wait a little, they will perceive how far I am worthy of expulsion. And as my cause is the cause of the people, if they suffer me to be crushed in this dark popish manner, I shall submit, knowing that I have attempted at the hazard of my all to serve them. I have advised with our friends in the delegate meeting, and find they all agree for me to wait this year to see what they will do. I hope the Lord will keep and prosper my way. My dear wife is very poorly, but I am hoping to hear that she is recovered. We go to Mr. Longridge's at first, and then consult with our friends what will be best for us to do for this year. I make no doubt but the Lord will provide; and we shall then see what will be the consequence of the friends examining and trying these matters. I have so many letters to write that I cannot enlarge. I expect my expulsion, and their refusing to make better rules, in most cases will have a good influence on our people. Many of the preachers are pressing on me to make a confession of having done wrong on the whole, that I may be restored. But I tell them, without conviction of guilt, confession is hypocrisy. Remember me to all friends.—I am, &c.,

A. KILHAM.

Having given the facts, so far as they have been ascertained, of Mr. Kilham's trial and expulsion, we shall leave them, without comment, to be weighed and judged upon by the reader; who can form his own opinion, as to whether Mr. Kilham had really committed any moral offence, whether the examinations of the charges brought against him were conducted according to those principles which are commonly acknowledged in the administration of justice, and lastly, whether the sentence of excommunication pronounced upon him by the Conference, was warranted by the Scriptures.

## CHAPTER VIII.

FROM AUGUST 1796, TO AUGUST 1797, WHEN MR. KILHAM WAS OUT OF THE METHODIST CONNEXION, AND EMPLOYED IN PUBLISHING THE METHODIST MONITOR, AND PREACHING IN VARIOUS PLACES.

THE first step taken by Mr. Kilham, after his condemnation by the Conference, was to print a short Address to the Methodist Connexion, as an antidote to the letter which had been sent to all parts by the preachers, affirming that Mr. Kilham had not been able to prove any of the allegations contained in his pamphlets. In this circular, Mr. Kilham announced the fact of his expulsion from the body, with a brief notice of the manner in which his trial had been conducted; and also apprised his friends that he was preparing to publish the particulars of his case, which would be circulated at the very earliest moment. In the meantime, he begged that a premature judgment might not be formed respecting his conduct; and offered, if they would wait for his statement, to bear any consequence which might follow, as he had the fullest conviction of being able to show that he had answered the charges made against him, in a way which would satisfy every unprejudiced person.

As soon as the sittings of Conference had closed, Mr. Kilham left London for Nottingham, for the purpose of having his own account of the trial printed,\* and in

\* Mr. Kilham's trial was printed by the late Mr. C. Sutton, of Nottingham, who was one of his most zealous friends. As we happen to have the statement afterwards rendered by Mr. Sutton to Mr. Kilham of the distribution of the copies of the trial, it may satisfy curiosity, and also serve to indicate the places which were most interested in Mr. Kilham's case, to insert it. There were sent to Canterbury 40 copies, to Yarmouth 40, Plymouth Dock 100, London 200, Bath 50, Bristol 100, Birmingham 150, Manchester 250, Liverpool 100, Darlington 100, Sunderland 220, Pickering 40, Malton 50, Huddersfield 50, Ashton 30.

order that the opinions of his friends in various places, to whom he had written respecting his future proceedings, might be collected. The counsel which he received from all quarters was, that he should not connect himself with any congregation or party, but travel from place to place for one year, to visit the societies where he might be invited. This exactly accorded with his own judgment, and was what he had first suggested, hoping, as he said, that by the time twelve months had elapsed, the grievances in the Connexion which he had complained of might be removed; and at all events, if they were not, no blame could then be attached either to himself or others for acting rashly in the adoption of any future plans which might become expedient. A recommendation for Mr. Kilham to commence a periodical publication having been made from Leeds, he wrote to his principal friends on that subject. The following letter will explain the project therein named:

*Nottingham, 13th Aug., 1796.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Your kind letter I received yesterday, and I am thankful to God for raising me up so many friends whom I have never seen. I find a number of places are like Manchester; the people consider my cause to be theirs, and are determined to support me in the trying hour. I make no doubt but the Lord will enable us to be bold and firm, that we may reap the advantages of our labours. I am grateful for the steps which have been taken on my account. These, when properly laid before the people, will have the desired end.

\* \* \* A friend from Leeds has proposed for me to publish, in numbers, every thing that is important in my own pamphlets, and in other publications, relating to Methodistical reform. Many original pieces are also at hand. The friends here strongly recommend this measure, as they think it the best that could be devised to get our sentiments,

Hanley 80, Chester 40, Leeds 240, Wigan 50, Preston 60, Blackburn 50, Newcastle upon Tyne 200, Alnwick 112, Sheffield 270, Nottingham 208, Mr. Kilham 120. Three thousand copies are here accounted for, which was the number ordered by Mr. Kilham; but it is probable another edition was issued, as we find by Mr. Sutton's letter, that subsequent orders had been received which he had not been able to supply, and he requested of Mr. Kilham either himself to publish the trial again, or to allow him to reprint it on his own account.

without any thing unconnected with them, properly circulated. Every thing that is inflammatory should be left out; and nothing be offered, but what will bear the test of strict examination. Perhaps the whole might be comprised in 12 or 15 numbers of 40 full pages, to come out fortnightly, or every three weeks. Will you weigh this matter, and give me your sentiments upon it in a few days? I have written to many places upon the same subject, and shall have their answers about the same time. If the friends encourage this measure, I shall publish proposals at the end of my trial, that the first number may be published early in October.

\* \* \* I expect it will be ten days before I can leave this place. I shall then hasten as fast as possible to the north, and take up my abode for a little while in Sunderland or in the neighbourhood. I am, your affectionate servant,

A. KILHAM.

To Mr. Jas. Harrop, Ashton-under-Line.

Immediately after Mr. Kilham had been expelled, he gave directions for his family to remove from the Chapel-house at Alnwick, to make room for his successor. It has been mentioned that Mr. Longridge, of Sunderland, had offered him a home, in case he were cast out by the Conference; and it was arranged that Mrs. Kilham and their daughter should remove thither at their convenience. The following letter from Mrs. Kilham, when at Newcastle, furnishes some particulars which deserve to be given:—

MY VERY DEAR ALEXANDER,

*Aug. 20, 1796.*

I received thy welcome letter this morning, from Sunderland. We left Alnwick on the 16th, stayed two days at Mr. Tweddle's, and came to Newcastle on the 18th. Mr. Annet sent Wm. Turner with our boxes last week. Both he and Mrs. A. were very kind. We were with them some days, and they were very unwilling to part with us in the end. Mrs. A. made me promise to write to her when I got to Sunderland: they are living in expectation of seeing thee in due time. The people in different parts of the circuit are crying, "surely he will not forsake us now." I have endeavoured to encourage those that were cast down to look forward and expect brighter days. The friends of the Conference said, they must give credit to 150 good men, before one individual; and that one held by them in much esteem. Others, again, urged, what chance had an honest

man against 150 —, for such they were? Mayst thou, my dear love, be directed by the unerring wisdom of the great Jehovah in all thy future ways, that not one step may be taken to grieve or turn out of the way of peace such as desire to be led and guided by the testimony and word of God, and to do all to his glory!

We are now in Mr. Smith's house, where we are treated with every mark of kindness and respect by all the family. Mr. J. Stamp is here, and is very friendly to me. We have many friends to see, but I cannot walk much at a time, my foot being weak, and apt to swell when I use it too much. Mr. Grundell has called to see us, and has invited us to his house, for which I thanked him. Thy dear father wrote me a very affectionate letter. Thank the good old man, for his kind offer, for me. I should esteem it a pleasure to spend a few days with him at his house, at a convenient season. I have received two letters for thee, one from Liverpool, and one from Newcastle-under-Line, both replete with generous kindness, and professions of friendship;—the one from Liverpool signed J. Speceall, the other Wm. Smith.

I hope the Lord will enable me to conduct myself in wisdom before all. I have peace in Him, and every thing I stand in need of. May the blessing of God this day rest on thee, and supply thy every want by the riches of His grace. Do make thyself easy on our account, and do that which will be most agreeable to thy friends. Happy would I be to see thee; but I willingly sacrifice all for thy good. Adieu, my dear love—I thank thee for all thy kindness to me since we parted.

I am, thine affectionate wife,

S. KILHAM.

Mr. Wm. Smith, of Newcastle, wrote to Mr. Kilham at the same date, mentioning Mr. Moir's suggestion of the Methodist Monitor, which was shortly afterwards acted upon in Leeds:

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We are favoured with the company of your good wife and daughter, whom we wish to render as comfortable as is in our power. I have received an excellent letter from Mr. Moir, of Aberdeen, which I have this day sent to Mr. Longridge, saying, if he approves of the plan there recommended, he may send it to you, with his observations thereon. His proposals are somewhat of the same nature of those recommended to you by our friends at Leeds. He thinks a

monthly publication of 24 pages might cast great light on the subjects now agitating among us. He would entitle it "The Methodist Monitor," &c., and he supposes letters and essays would be received sufficient to furnish matter for the publication. As I expect Mr. Longridge may probably send you the letter, I say no more about it. Wishing you a safe journey to Newcastle,

I am, your's, &c,  
W. M. SMITH.

When Mr. Kilham had fully prepared his trial for the press, he went from Nottingham into Lincolnshire, on a visit of a few days to his relations, where he preached several times in Methodist chapels, the use of which was offered to him by the trustees, though often contrary to the wishes of the preachers, who generally opposed him to the utmost. It has been more than once remarked, that the objections raised by the leading individuals in the Connexion, and at the Conference, against Mr. Kilham, were chiefly in relation to particular expressions which he had employed in his writings, implying disrespect to the memory of Mr. Wesley, or severe censure on the preachers; and that he had never been fully met on the true ground on which he professed to stand,—viz., as advocating a better system of government for the body. No sooner, however, had he been expelled, than a number of insinuations began to be made, of a different character from those charges which he had hitherto had to encounter; and these new allegations were calculated to take effect in many minds, when the former failed to raise a prejudice against him. For instance, hints were thrown out of his not being sound in doctrine; that he was a jacobin, and an enemy to the existing government; that he was intending to set aside the itinerant plan, and substitute Independency for it, &c. On reaching Epworth, Mr. Kilham ascertained that the preacher who was stationed in the Thorne circuit, finding the people there generally favourable to his proposed reforms, had been trying to set them against him by an imputation\* which roused

\* It would be difficult fully to characterise such attempts as this to ruin his reputation with the public,—but from the time that Mr.

him to repudiate it with the utmost indignation, in a letter from which we extract that part which refers to the subject:—

*Epworth, 28th Aug., 1796.*

MR. HALL—SIR,

I was exceedingly surprised in finding that you had gone to Mr. Sauce, in London, to propagate one of the most horrible falsehoods of me that ever was invented by the prince of the power of the air. And I find that you have been declaring the same in this place before respectable witnesses. You declare, you heard me wish damnation to all crowned heads two years ago, in Bristol. Now, Sir, I am obliged to inform you that this is as contrary to truth as light is from darkness. I never wished any thing of the kind to any person under heaven. I could not do it to the worst enemy I have in the world. I could not even wish such a wish of *you*, who have acted such a base part to me, without sinning against my own soul. \* \* \* \* \*

I am, &c.,

A. K.

We are not aware that any reply to this letter was made by the individual to whom it was addressed; and as Mr. Kilham, in another part of it, intimated that in case his character continued to be “injured by him in a way so contrary to the Gospel, he should be brought into a court to answer for it,” it is probable the slander was not repeated.

Leeds was the next place which Mr. Kilham visited, both on account of its being on his way to the north, where his family remained, and because it was connected with his plan of proceeding during the year. While

Kilham became obnoxious to the leading men in the Connexion, on account of his proposed changes in the system, there seemed to be no conscience exercised in speaking evil of him; and in saying this, we do not mean so much to impute generally a deliberate intention of doing him wrong, as to observe that Conference, having fixed upon him the odium of treating Mr. Wesley's memory with disrespect, and of being an enemy to Methodism as established by its founder, numbers were prepared to believe every thing which was bad of him; and when reports were invented by (we hope only a few) unscrupulous individuals, they were taken up by others without enquiry or consideration, and propagated as undoubted facts. In this way Mr. Kilham was injured by thousands who had no personal ill-will against him, and by many, too, who probably thought they were doing God service by repeating what they had heard—and what they regarded as strictly true—of one whom the Conference had reprobated.



in that neighbourhood, the trustees in several parts of the circuit were anxious for him to preach in their chapels; and the pulpits of three dissenting places of worship in the town were also offered to him, which he repeatedly occupied. Mr. Benson, the superintendent then stationed at Leeds, was greatly opposed to Mr. Kilham's being allowed to preach; and at Hunslet, where he had many warm friends, who invited him to give them a sermon in the Methodist chapel, an individual under Mr. B.'s influence took away the keys before the time of service, so that the congregation could not enter. This circumstance, as might well be anticipated, only strengthened the determination of those trustees who were desirous of hearing Mr. Kilham. They procured the window to be opened, and by that means the door was unfastened within to admit the people, and Mr. Kilham preached to a large congregation. Before leaving this part, Mr. Kilham finally arranged for the publication of the Methodist Monitor, and immediately wrote a preface, and provided matter for the first number, which was to appear in October. The reader will have understood the general design of this work from the letters suggesting the undertaking, already given. Two passages from the introductory advertisement in the first number, will further explain its object:—

“There are several things that encourage me to undertake this work: 1. I believe it will be for the glory of God, and the furtherance of the gospel. 2. It will give our people, and others, suitable views of religious liberty in general, and what ought to be established among us in particular. 3. It will, in some measure, state the subjects that now agitate our Connexion in a proper light; and may awaken our friends in the largest circuits to a sense of our danger, and lead them to make use of such efforts as will save our Connexion from ruin. 4. I hope the Lord will make it instrumental in His hand, to destroy the influence of any that oppress the people, under a pretence that the glory of God, and the cause of Christ, require the measures which they pursue. If their undue power could be broken, Methodism would lift up its head, supported by equitable laws. 5. This work will contain many things that are not immediately connected with our disputes, and which may, under the

blessing of God, be of infinite service to thousands yet unborn. 6. I have a prospect of help from many pious, sensible preachers and friends, belonging to our Connexion, and from respectable persons of other religious communities. 7. It will give me another opportunity of shewing my love to the preachers in general, to the Connexion at large, and to persons of every denomination. This alone outweighs every consideration of the reproach and contempt I may meet with from any quarter."

"It is painful to differ in judgment, on some occasions, from those we love—from the persons we have taken sweet counsel with in our way to heaven: but when the solemn rights of conscience are invaded, we are called upon by the Lord our God to sacrifice every thing that would bring guilt upon our souls. To be separated from my brethren, with whom I have travelled for twelve years, on account of what I have written, is far from being pleasing in itself; but when I am conscious that I have aimed at the glory of God, and the welfare of Methodism, in all that I have written, this bears up my spirit in the midst of reproach and persecution. Yet as I feel a disposition in my breast that would lead me to acknowledge, with grief, anything that can be proved contrary to the gospel in my conduct, and to ask pardon of my brethren, the Connexion at large, or the whole world, this gives me a degree of satisfaction that cannot be described. If I had nothing in view but blackening the characters of the preachers, that our people and the world might abhor them—to sow strife and discord among the different societies—to divide and devour the followers of Christ—and to raise myself to the head of a party, I should act like a fiend, and every sincere lover of Christ ought to look upon me with indignation, and spurn what I have written with suitable abhorrence. While we are assured the existing evils among us are calculated to ruin our Connexion, and that our exposing them in the manner we have done, is the direct way to have them renounced, whatever consequences may follow, from the opposition of preachers, trustees, stewards, leaders, or private members in any place, we have the satisfaction of reflecting that we are merely the innocent cause of them; and in the midst of the conflicts which happen, our rejoicing is this,—the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world."

Mr. Kilham now proceeded to Newcastle, where Mrs. K. and his daughter had been residing from the time they left Alnwick; and shortly after his arrival, having visited his friends in the town and neighbourhood, from whom he received every encouragement, they removed to Sunderland to sojourn a short time with Mr. Longridge, agreeably to his invitation given before the Conference, to make his house a home, on the supposition that he might possibly be expelled by the preachers from the Connexion. By this time, Mr. Kilham's account of his trial had been printed and extensively circulated throughout the Methodist body: the Conference had likewise published their statement, so that the societies had the means of judging of his case for themselves. The effect of reading the particulars of his examination appears to have been, not only to have bound his friends faster to him, under the conviction that he had not been fairly treated, but to have stimulated them to contend more resolutely than ever against the arbitrary authority of the preachers, under which they felt as if the liberty and character of no one weresafe. In Manchester, Stockport, Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield, and other places, meetings were held, and central committees of correspondence formed, whose object was to co-operate in securing those reforms in the system which were deemed to be essential to the peace of the Methodist Connexion. Many addresses and circulars were published by those Committees, embodying the views of the parties on these subjects, and several also expressed an opinion respecting Mr. Kilham's conduct and trial. The Stockport address, which was signed by Mr. Geo. Beaumont, Secretary, says,—

DEAR BRETHREN,

We feel it our duty, as members of the Methodist societies, in this hour of danger, to entreat you, to take into your serious consideration the urgent necessity of a fuller communication being opened between the preachers and people, that those evils may be prevented which we fear are coming upon us. We suggest a few things which appear calculated to remove jealousies, and to confirm the good opinion the people

have hitherto had of their preachers. The outlines we lay before you are as follow :

We think the enquiry ought to be made immediately, what power should be lodged with the preachers? and what authority the people should have in the direction of affairs? so that proper bounds may be fixed, that all parties may harmonize, and act for the general good. Our reasons for the above, arise, in part, from the preachers having the sole management of affairs, supported by general collections. This naturally creates jealousies; and the most likely mode of doing them away is, by admitting a suitable number of laymen, deputed by their brethren, to have a proper share in the management of our concerns. It must be acknowledged that they who are the supporters of any public good, ought not to be excluded from knowing how it is effected; and from having equal power in the exercise of the means by which it is carried on. We are persuaded that upright dealing always gains credit by examination; and if the preachers have dealt uprightly, and mean to do so still, (the distrust of which, nothing can give confirmation to but their rejection of such an equitable plan,) their little loss of power will be their great gain of esteem and approbation.

Although many persons may think that Mr. Kilham has gone too far, yet they must confess that there are remarks in his pamphlets well worthy their attention, and that go a great way towards developing those grievances we still groan under. If his labours should prove ineffectual, and he himself be deserted, what hope is there of others coming forward; and where is the preacher who dare, after him, make so noble a stand against the evils that do still exist among us? We think (without entering into the merits of Mr. Kilham's conduct) it is a blot upon his accusers, and an insult to common sense, to become, (after the articles of agreement for general pacification and discipline were entered into,) both his judges and jury, when another mode of trial might have been adopted agreeable to the rule, which would have kept the preachers from any blame had Mr. Kilham been found guilty; and have silenced both himself and friends for ever in the eyes of honest men. If any of us had been in Mr. Kilham's place, we should, like Charles of old, have denied the authority of such a self-made court, and have appealed to a fair open trial by jury, and of whom a fair challenge should have been granted. For an Englishman to be tried by his accusers, it almost makes one shudder at the

consequences. The trial of Mr. Kilham before the London Conference, we think, is a most flagrant species of despotism; and what renders the preachers still more formidable to the people is, their making themselves absolute governors, and, in virtue of that, seizing upon all the rights of the people; and making only such laws or rules for them as they think proper. So that, upon the whole, they are the only makers, judges, and interpreters, and, in nearly all cases, likewise, the executioners of their own laws, which have no other limits than their own arbitrary will. Mr. Kilham may well say, "If the people suffer me to be crushed in this dark popish manner, I shall submit, knowing that I have attempted, at the hazard of my all, to serve them."

The Manchester address has the following,—

DEAR BRETHREN,

We do not attempt to charge the great body of our preachers with having designedly assisted in taking away our liberty, nevertheless we see, with grief, that we are not in possession of it. They abrogate rules or laws just as they think proper, without the consent or even the knowledge of the people, requiring passive obedience to all the laws so imposed upon us. We are very willing to believe that many of our preachers have nothing in view but the glory of God and the good of his people; but the system is oppressive, and may subject the people to many inconveniences.

We will not here enter into a discussion of the various sentiments of preachers and people upon the justness or unjustness of the Conference laws, or the degree of power to be vested in it; nor will we investigate the various plans of reform which have been proposed: but we will venture to propose what appears to us to be the more excellent way.

It is our opinion that a proper number of delegates ought to be chosen every year to sit in Conference, to assist in its deliberations, having equal power, by vote or otherwise, with the preachers: by this, even the shadow of a fear for the people's interest would be done away, and we should love as brethren.

That nothing may be done without due deliberation, we think it would be proper—yea, is highly necessary, for the people to assemble in the different societies and maturely weigh these things—consider what each can do for the general good—appoint a committee in every large society, to procure and communicate every information that may be judged

useful. This may prevent the convulsion, which, from the present state of our affairs, we have much cause to fear.—For ourselves, we have appointed such a committee, and earnestly request every friend to Methodism to communicate every thing important upon this subject, directed to Thomas Heamer, No. 2, Princes' Street, Salford.

We know this is contrary to a rule of the late Conference, published in the New Minutes ; but as that, as well as many other rules, were framed, exacted, and published without our consent, or even our knowledge, we do not account them binding to us. We have never delegated a power to Conference to make laws for us, therefore its laws cannot be binding without our consent.

Signed in behalf of the meeting,

JOHN SHORE, Chairman.

P. S. The important case of Mr. Kilham lies near our hearts ; we have carefully weighed what has been said on both sides, and are of opinion that he has sufficiently answered the charges brought against him, and made all the concessions that Christians could ask, or a Christian make ; consequently, we deem his expulsion unmerited.

We hope Conference will see this in a proper light, and recal him to the Connexion : if not, we believe the people ought to take the matter into their own hands, to see that justice be done to an injured brother. For ourselves (considering his cause to be a just one) we have determined to support him so long as it appears to be so, and he does not oppose the itinerant plan.

If we are asked,—do we wish to foment division in the church ? we answer,—God forbid : but we ask,—has not Conference done it by expelling one of its most useful members, without proving any one charge of immorality, want of abilities, or diligence in the work against him ? We will not foment divisions, but if pleading the cause of an injured servant of Jesus Christ be accounted such, we are content.

In addition to the preceding testimonials in his favour, Mr. Kilham received from individuals the strongest expressions of sympathy and regard. Indeed, the letters sent to him from different quarters on the subject of his expulsion, would of themselves fill a volume ; some of these were from persons who did not, for reasons which they assigned, appear very prominently

as his friends, but who, nevertheless, deemed it right to communicate their sentiments, and to encourage him more privately and confidentially. The following letter is of this description :—

*London, September 23, 1796.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received your kind letter, and was much rejoiced to find you met with so much encouragement in the places where you have been. You mentioned your intention of publishing a periodical work. Be so good as set down the names of John and Eliza B— in the list of your subscribers, and we shall expect two copies of each number, as soon as published, from your agent in town. If you publish a list of names, would it not be better to publish only the initials of ours, as it might create ill-will in a house not a hundred miles from the New Chapel, with whom we are on very intimate terms?—Not that I should mind my name being published all over the kingdom, as one of your supporters; but my sisters, though not less firmly attached to your cause, are less courageous. \* \* \* I have not been able to render you much assistance, and my sisters are afraid to intermeddle for fear some terrible anathema should be launched against them from the holy office, for aiding and abetting the heretic Kilham! You will have the goodness, I know, to take the will for the deed; that, I can assure you, is heartily at your service. \* \* \* In reading over your account of your mock trial, the satisfaction I felt at finding you so ably clear yourself of the futile charges laid against you, was much allayed, when I perceived there could be so much gross injustice, among a set of men whom I had been taught from my childhood to respect. I can scarcely depict to you the antipathy I felt against the person you describe as standing at the door of the communion table, to see that none of the preachers refused to set his hand and seal to the scroll which at that moment polluted the altar of the Lord.—I should have written before this time, but I feared my letter might possibly get to Sunderland before you. Depend upon it, I shall diffuse your writings with the utmost industry, as I believe your cause to be closely connected with that of truth and liberty in general. My sisters desire to be remembered, with me, to you and Mrs. K.—Your sincere friend, J. B.

In a letter dated Leeds, Sept. 5, when he was on his journey home from Conference, Mr. Kilham says,—

"By the persuasion of friends, I am fixing to come and live here; that is, my little family, while I will wander up and down. I am going to Newcastle tomorrow, and hope to be back in a month."

As soon as it had become known that Mr. Kilham had been excluded by the Conference, he received a letter from the managers of Milburn Place Chapel,\* North Shields, inviting him, with his family, to occupy furnished apartments which were provided for a minister there, and to supply the pulpit at least for a season; but as his intention was not to settle, for the present, in any particular place, and being about to issue a periodical work in Leeds, he declined the offer, and prepared for removing into Yorkshire.

Mr. Kilham left the north of England, and went to Leeds, in the beginning of October, and resided at Mr. Christopher Heaps', Kirkgate, where every kindness was shown to himself and family.

The applications made to Mr. K., to visit different

\* Milburn Place Chapel had been built under singular circumstances, the particulars of which were written by Mr. Edward Coates, and afterwards published. They were in substance as follows:—In 1783, the Methodists requiring a chapel to be built at North Shields, two plots of ground offered themselves for that purpose, and the friends differing in opinion as to which should be selected, became divided into two parties, who respectively applied to Mr. Wesley for his sanction to the building being placed on the scite which each preferred. Mr. Wesley was understood by both to countenance the separate applications made to him, with a promise to send them preachers; and as it was admitted that one chapel only was to be received into the Connexion by him at that place, each, of course, believed the other would be rejected. It was indeed positively said, that both Mr. Wesley and Dr. Coke, who had also corresponded with them on the subject, had given a pledge to that effect. Under this impression, both parties began to build, affirming to their respective friends that they did so with Mr. Wesley's consent. During the progress of the erection, application was made for the chapels to be settled on the Conference plan; but the Milburn Place people,—in consequence of some things which had come to their knowledge, tending to create misgivings that they had not been ingenuously dealt with, and that the opposition chapel which they had all along been told would not be received by Mr. Wesley, had, in reality, been going on with his approbation,—hesitated to invest the premises as requested; and wished to have some explanation, before they permitted them to go out of their power. In a long disputation, both by letter and verbally, Dr. Coke made use of an expression which, as they conceived, exhibited the whole policy of which they had been the dupes. The Doctor, being pushed on



parts where he had warm supporters, were too numerous to admit of his remaining long in one place ; and the urgency of circumstances soon warranted his own description of the life he would have to lead that year, which, indeed, was an incessant "wandering up and down." This he found to be indispensable, that he might encourage and counsel the friends of liberty in their struggle for Methodistical reforms, as well as to counteract the designs of his enemies, who, he observes in his diary, had set a different calumny afloat respecting him in almost every circuit where he was known ; and, lastly, that he might preach the gospel, as he had resolved to do, wherever a door was opened for his admission. His first visits, after coming to Leeds, were to Huddersfield, Halifax, York, Sheffield, Hull, and other towns in Yorkshire within a convenient distance, where he preached nearly every day in the week, and two or three times on the Sabbath,—sometimes in Methodist Chapels ; and sometimes in Independent places of worship, which were obtained when the former were refused ; and sometimes, when neither could

the subject, tacitly admitted that the chapel built in opposition to Milburn Place had been encouraged, and—apparently while off his guard,—assigned as a reason, that Mr. Wesley had some suspicion they might not settle Milburn Place on the Conference plan ; so he was resolved, by way of "having two strings to his bow," to promote the erection of both—"that he might, by rubbing them together," get them made over to Conference. On hearing this, the Milburn Place Trustees, to shew that they had not any private ends in view, offered to relinquish the chapel to Dr. Coke or Mr. Wesley, in case they were relieved from responsibility ; but this being declined, they refused to part with their authority over it. It was, however, supplied with preachers by Mr. Wesley for some time, in the hope that the trustees might at length make it over to the Conference ; but the refusal to do so, unless on the terms before-mentioned, being persevered in, Mr. Wesley, in the end, withdrew the preachers ; they then obtained a supply for the pulpit as well as they could. The Rev. John Atlay, who had been a preacher under Mr. Wesley for many years, but who had settled at Dewsbury as the minister of a chapel there, frequently went to North Shields, and spent a few weeks at a time preaching at Milburn Place. The chapel was thus situated when Mr. Kilham was expelled by the Conference ; and as he was well known and much respected there, the invitation already noticed was given him to take up his residence in the house. When the separation occurred in 1797, Milburn Place Chapel became united with the Methodist New Connexion.

be had, or when the congregations were larger than they could contain, he preached in the open air. The numerous audiences which attended, were partly attracted, no doubt, by the curiosity which was excited to hear one who had become the subject of so much controversy; but, besides this, Mr. Kilham's style of preaching, being of a pathetic and popular character, it was always acceptable, and brought together a considerable number of persons as hearers.

The "Methodist Monitor"\* had no sooner begun to be published, than its importance was made manifest: the effect of it, as well as the account of his trial, was to compel the leading men belonging to the Conference, who were opposed to Mr. Kilham, to speak in vindication of their proceedings against him; and their statements being replied to by him in this periodical, it had a tendency to strengthen his cause more and more. Mr. Kilham freely animadverted on the proceedings and resolutions of Conference, 1796, at which he had been expelled, noticing several alterations which had been made in the rules of the Connexion; and while he admitted that, in some particulars, the changes made were improvements, he maintained that, in other respects, liberty had become even more restrained than ever; and above all, as the Conference still adhered to the principle of excluding the laity from its meetings, every objection which had been urged against its authority was still in force. The parties who appeared most conspicuously against Mr. Kilham in print, were Messrs. Mather and Pawson. Besides other matter contained in their publications, relating to topics which have

\* The Monitor ought to be republished by the Methodist New Connexion Book Room, in a volume corresponding with the Magazine, to which, properly speaking, it is an introductory work. Besides a number of valuable hints on practical and experimental religion, the information which it contains on church government and circumstances connected with the separation, renders it almost indispensable that the Methodist Monitor should be preserved by the community on whose origin and establishment it throws so much light. The publication of the Monitor ceased in September, 1797, and preparations were immediately made for issuing the New Methodist Magazine, which has been continued to the present time.

ceased to deserve notice, they were occasionally led to make remarks with a view to defend the exclusive power of the preachers at Conference. The following is one of their statements, which Mr Kilham answered in the *Methodist Monitor*. Messrs. Mather and Pawson say, in a joint address,—

“We seriously declare, as in the presence of God, that although we have attended near forty Conferences, we never knew a single rule made (where the people were concerned) but their interest and happiness were kept in view, and the prosperity of the work of God was principally considered; and so it always ought to be. And we would ask any reasonable man under heaven, if the preachers are not the proper representatives of the people, who are? Who, in the name of common sense, are so likely to have their interests at heart, as their spiritual fathers?”

Mr. Kilham has the following remarks upon this passage:—

“1. The present Methodist preachers are not the spiritual fathers of, perhaps, one tenth of the people now in society. Thousands have joined us by means of those who now rest from their labours; and tens of thousands more, by the influence of the blessing of God attending prayer-meetings, [and it might have been added, by means of the labours of Local preachers.] 2. If ‘common sense’ requires spiritual fathers to be the representatives of their children, these fathers ought not to assume a right to represent those that do not stand in this relation to them. 3. I apprehend, that even spiritual fathers ought not to claim a right to represent their children except during the time of their non-age. Our fathers according to the flesh, only claim this right till we come of age. Our spiritual fathers ought to claim no more. 4. The non-age of Methodism, as it refers to most of the principal places, is past. The societies are old and experienced. Many of them were established long before half of the preachers who now call themselves their spiritual fathers were born. 5. ‘In the name of common sense,’ then, have the preachers a right to represent the people in general, without being fairly elected to this office? If they claim it without the consent of the different societies, is it not usurpation? 6. If rules are made in the Conference, where the people have not a single voice or representative, however ‘their

interest and happiness may be kept in view, and the prosperity of the work of God be principally considered,' according to the views of the preachers, yet, as they are not made by the concurrence of the different societies, our friends cannot be satisfied. 7. Let any examine the rules and laws made since Mr. Wesley's death, particularly the rules of the last Conference, and they will see how far the 'interest and happiness' of the people have been kept in view. When the priests of the church of Rome made very arbitrary, oppressive, and even bloody laws, the same declarations have been made use of. Reason and common sense both declare, that the people ought to have persons chosen from among themselves, to sit in district meetings, and in the Conference."

Having spent several weeks in Yorkshire, Mr. Kilham was pressed to pay a similar visit to Lancashire and Cheshire. His friends there being both numerous and exceedingly kind to himself and family, Mrs. Kilham (in the hope that a change of air might benefit her health), and his daughter, accompanied him to Manchester early in November. While there, he preached very often, chiefly in places of worship belonging to Independent congregations, which were freely granted. On more than one occasion, when circumstances appeared to require it, in consequence of attempts having been made to mislead the minds of the Christian public, as to the cause of Mr. Kilham's expulsion from the Methodist Society, he entered into explanations on the subject, which created a strong sympathy in his behalf on the part of individuals belonging to different denominations of dissenters, who showed him the greatest respect.

Mr. Mather, who was stationed at Manchester, made several efforts to counteract this feeling in favour of Mr. Kilham, and not being able to succeed in this according to his wish, he deemed it a fit cause of quarrelling with those communities who supported, or in anywise sanctioned, Mr. Kilham, insinuating that they were opposing Methodism, and adding many severe reflections upon them for so doing.

Mr. Kilham then visited the city of Chester, where

a chapel\* had been built by the more liberal-minded members of the Methodist Society, for the purpose of having the Sacrament administered therein; the trustees of the other chapel having refused to allow that ordinance. From Chester, Mr. Kilham went to Liverpool; previous to his going there, a written communication, signed by a large majority of the trustees of two chapels in the town, was made to Mr. Moore, the superintendent of the circuit, informing him that Mr. Kilham was about to visit them, and begging him not to oppose his preaching in those places. Mr. Moore's reply was not only a refusal to comply with this request, but it included a severe reprimand of the trustees for countenancing, as he said, a man whom the Conference had expelled. This led to much disagreement and strife between the trustees and other friends of Mr. Kilham, and the preachers, which, as it could serve no good purpose to perpetuate the remembrance of, may properly be passed over here,—after observing, generally, that by many contrivances, on the part of Mr. Kilham's supporters, which his opponents did their best to frustrate, he preached several times while in Liverpool; and, an attempt having been made by one of the preachers, while in the pulpit, to represent Mr. Kilham as an enemy to Methodism, he took an opportunity to explain the leading circumstances of his case, and detailed some of the causes why, as well as the manner how,

\* When this second place of worship had been erected, and application made to Conference for the Lord's Supper to be given therein, the preachers objected to issue directions to that effect, or to have any thing to do with it, until it should be made over to Conference. The Trustees did not feel disposed so to invest the premises, knowing, as they did, that in case they thus committed themselves, constituted as Conference was, they should be entirely deprived of all power, and might possibly be prevented from enjoying those privileges for which the chapel was expressly built. After much negotiation, the Conference refused to appoint preachers, and it was left in a similar manner that Milburn Place Chapel, North Shields, had been, some years before. The Trustees, therefore, provided supplies of preachers as well as they were able, until the separation occurred in 1797, when the Society and chapel were united with the Methodist New Connexion. The late Mr. Mort assisted to supply the chapel at Chester before the division, when he came out to travel, and was one of the most judicious and respectable preachers in the Connexion.

Conference had expelled him from the Connexion. This information being read to the great body of the members of society, and the hearers, excited much interest, and made a strong impression in Mr. Kilham's favour. Mr. Kilham's next visits were to Bolton, Wigan, Preston, Blackburn, and several neighbouring places, where he had friends in the societies, by whom he had been invited, and was received with every mark of respect. In these, as in other towns, he preached frequently, sometimes in the Methodist Chapels, when his supporters had influence to procure them for him, and when the preachers were not decidedly bent on keeping him out of the pulpits.

Between three and four months had now elapsed since Mr. Kilham's condemnation by the Conference, and nothing had occurred on the part of those who had promoted his expulsion, which in the least indicated a disposition to retrace that step, or to effect those reforms for which he had contended. Yet Mr. Kilham still hoped, if he did not even fully believe, that an adjustment would take place, to the satisfaction of all sides. His judicious friends, however, began to be of another opinion. They saw the most influential preachers resolved to maintain the high ground which they had taken, in regard to their own exclusive authority, without the slightest apparent disposition to yield anything of importance which the laity claimed: and, moreover, there was a union and correspondence in the movements of the preachers, which fully showed that they had waived all other differences, and entered into an agreement to act together in resisting any interference with the functions of government as exercised by themselves at Conference. This being the case, in the judgment of those who were unwilling longer to submit to such rules in the church, a separation seemed to them to be inevitable. Some friends in Leeds, in writing on this subject to Mr. Kilham, suggested the propriety of a subscription fund being formed to meet certain expenses which such an occurrence might occasion, and to encourage those preachers who were friendly to a reformation, to come forward

and assist in the establishment of a new Itinerancy. Mr. Kilham's answer to this proposal shows how unwilling he was to entertain the thoughts of dividing the Connexion, or, if that could not be avoided, of doing any thing which might by possibility bring individuals under the suspicion of other than the purest motives.—His words in reply were' "I disapprove of it altogether—I yet hope that a division will be prevented; but whatever be the issue, if the preachers will not act from the conviction of their own minds, the Lord will provide. I am determined never to countenance the holding out a golden bait to allure them. Shall we make the love of filthy lucre our condemnation? Let us put our confidence in Jehovah, and pursue the paths of uprightness, and all shall be well." These, and other circumstances, fully clear Mr. Kilham of the imputations frequently cast upon him, of having a design to rend the Connexion, and of establishing himself as the head of a new sect. He had no such purpose whatever when he wrote against abuses and arbitrary principles in Methodism; but was persuaded at the time, that, by so doing, he was using the best means of consolidating and perpetuating the system, as well as rendering it more efficient in accomplishing the end for which it was established.

From the time they left Leeds, Mrs. Kilham had been residing at Mr. Heamer's, in Salford, in feeble and evidently fast-declining health. Yet she was unwilling for Mr. Kilham's invitations to different places to be refused on her account, and urged him to make the visits before alluded to, as well as to preach almost daily in the neighbourhood of Manchester, when there. The following particulars of her state to the period of her death, which occurred on the 23rd Feb., 1797, are taken from a brief memoir by Mr. Kilham:—

"While I was at Chester, I received a letter informing me of the situation of my dear wife, whose pain and weakness increased every day: this induced me to alter my plan, and return to Manchester as soon as possible. On reaching Salford, I found her very ill indeed; but the Lord bore up her spirits, and enabled

her to rejoice in his love. I truly sympathized with her in her affliction, and earnestly entreated God on her behalf. I was thankful that she had every possible attention shewn to her by the friends, and I hope I shall ever retain a grateful remembrance of their kindness in her trying situation. Ill as she was, she was quite unwilling that any place should be neglected on her account; I therefore went to Bolton, according to appointment, and preached in the Independent chapel twice, and in the evening at the Presbyterian chapel, at both which I had good congregations, and found great liberty. Mr. Hopper came to hear me; the old gentleman commended my sermon, and said he could not justify the Conference in many of the steps they had taken. In a few days, I came to Manchester again, and found my wife still worse; but yet she would not consent that I should omit visiting any place where I had engaged to go, on account of her state of health. I therefore went to Blackburn, but returned as soon as possible. When I came to Manchester, I found all the medical help which we had been able to procure seemed to be of no use to her; nor could she obtain any relief from the constant pain and sickness with which she was so much oppressed. I was much troubled at her affliction, and earnestly besought her recovery, if consistent with the will of God. She spake very freely respecting her situation, and of her entire resignation to Divine Providence: she desired I would not be anxious for her recovery, for she said, she believed her sickness would be unto death. Her mind appeared happy, and she seemed to have no wish but to promote the glory of God, saying that death would be her eternal gain. She spake to me about the child and other matters, which shewed her willingness to leave all transitory things. While she was thus conversing, I was deeply affected, and wept much; but she begged I would not oppose the will of God, but cheerfully submit to it. She exhorted me to cleave close to God, and pursue the way that lay before me, not fearing the face of any adversary. When she had opened her mind, and had conversed freely on these subjects, she appeared more comfortable,



and expressed her happiness and thankfulness for her glorious hope of future felicity. Notwithstanding her extreme illness, she would not hear of me neglecting my intended visit to Sheffield. When I left Manchester to go there, it was strongly impressed on my mind, that I should return again to bury my dead; I wept and prayed for several miles on the road, and the impression seemed to be irresistible. On my return, I found her truly in the furnace of affliction, but she was still happy in God; and rejoiced to see me again, requesting now, for the first time, I would not leave her any more,—which was a plain proof to me, that she was convinced her end was swiftly approaching. Being advised to remove her into the country, we went to Redhall, where we were kindly entertained, and after three days went forward to Ashton, intending by easy stages to reach Leeds, but soon found it impossible to proceed further. We therefore remained with the kind family of Mr. Wm. Heginbottom for about six weeks, when, after a violent conflict, she left the world without a sigh. Through all her affliction, her mind was wonderfully supported by the Lord; she found the fear of death removed, and gave a blessed account of the hope and confidence she had in God; she was fully persuaded, throughout the whole of her affliction, that she should not recover, and when she had any freedom from pain, and was apparently something better, she still did not entertain any hopes of amendment, but always supposed her sickness would be unto death, and was fully determined to prepare for that awful event. Many were the gracious truths that fell from her lips; her conversation was truly edifying and instructing, and when she could speak no longer, it was evident from her gestures, that her heart was engaged with God, and that she experienced in her last moments those true consolations, and that triumph over death, which are the peculiar privileges of them that have followed Him, and have devoted their lives to His service. At the first of her affliction, for some time we both earnestly intreated God for her recovery; but when I began to perceive the nature of her complaints, and also from

the disposition of her mind, that she was evidently ripening for eternity, I began to conclude she would not long remain an inhabitant of this world; and though I was much troubled at the thought of what was coming upon me, and at the great loss I should sustain, I was at length enabled to say, "Thy will be done," and by earnest prayer, my mind became comforted, and I was assisted to cast my care on the Lord."

The effect of such a bereavement on the generality of persons, would have been to disqualify them for a time for the performance of every public or official duty; but Mr. Kilham, frequently, as it will have been observed, by the persuasion of Mrs. Kilham, had been accustomed not to allow any thing to interrupt his labours to do good; and, concurring in the opinions of the eminent Matthew Henry and Dr. Doddridge, (both of whom improved the deaths of members of their own families,) he considered that mourning ought not to hinder individuals from appearing in the house of God, nor from taking their proper part in His service. On the day on which Mrs. Kilham was interred, he, therefore, according to previous engagements entered into before that event was anticipated, preached thrice; and in so doing, he took occasion to select subjects suitable for the improvement of the afflictive dispensation of Providence which had befallen him, to his own good, and the benefit of others. He describes his feelings on this occasion in these words:—"It was the most solemn day of my life; my tears were my meat, in the sense David wished those words to be understood. The mercy of God, the kindness of friends, the loss of my dear partner, my own unworthiness, and a thousand other things, melted me before all. Yet the Lord helped me to speak to the people." The effect produced by these sermons was very powerful, and at the request of those who heard them, they were afterwards published, together with an account prefixed of the Christian life and experience of Mrs. Kilham.

It may be mentioned, as exemplifying the disposition which prevailed at this time, to convert every thing which occurred to Mr. Kilham into an occasion for

saying something to his injury, that no sooner was Mrs. Kilham dead, than it was rumoured by his adversaries that she had died of a broken heart, occasioned by the course he had taken in reference to Methodism. The circumstances in her conduct, together with her letters, which we have already noticed, contain a satisfactory refutation of this calumny. Mr. Kilham animadverts on the rumour as follows:—

“Some have been so cruel as to affirm, that her affliction and death were occasioned by the measures I have pursued in opposing the preachers. But nothing can be more false than this assertion. I can appeal to the friends in Alnwick circuit, and in every place where we have been since the Conference, whether she ever gave a single hint of being dissatisfied with my conduct, or the consequences of it. The friends in Leeds and in Manchester can bear testimony, that an insinuation of this nature is extremely unchristian. Her letters to me prove the contrary, to a demonstration.

“But had she died of a broken heart, (which is utterly contrary to truth,) was it my conduct, or the conduct and cruelty of the Conference that led to this? Setting aside the persecution I met with before the Conference, my expulsion, and being published through the nation as the vilest of the vile, also the manner of my being expelled, might have affected a heart less susceptible of feeling than her’s. After I had served the Connexion twelve years, and the preachers never attempted to charge me with any thing immoral, yet they expelled me. My wife had never received a farthing for quarterage, and yet they turned her out of house and harbour, without allowing one shilling, either to remove from Alnwick, or begin house-keeping with, in any place. Now I appeal, whether these things were not enough to break a heart of stone? But so far from their having this effect on my dear wife, she bore them as part of her cross, and cheerfully submitted to the will of God.”

Almost immediately after the death of Mrs. Kilham, he went into Yorkshire, and from thence to Lincolnshire, for the purpose of placing his daughter under the care of his father; and, having visited different

places which lay conveniently within his reach, he returned to Leeds. The following letter was written when on his journey:—

*Thorne, 24th March, 1797.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

The sermons you have mentioned, I have some thoughts of publishing; but I think it cannot be in the Monitor. We have other matters that must come into it. I had given up the thought of printing them, till your last letter, but I think at present they may remove prejudice from some, and help others; I hope, therefore, to get forward in writing them out for the press, though I have been very much engaged by night and day, for the Monitor, at Leeds, and now I must do what I can at spare hours here, and where I go;—but my letters take up so much of my time. May the Lord help, and bless abundantly, that we may do all to His glory.

While I was in Leeds, I had an opportunity of preaching in several places, and things appear more prosperous than before. Mr. Bramwell's letter\* has been a nail in a sure place; we hope the Lord will own us with his presence, and cause the light of his countenance to shine upon us more than ever.

\* The letter alluded to had been written by Mr. Bramwell, and publicly addressed to the preachers in November, for the purpose of stirring them up to greater zeal and personal piety; and, as was observed by many at the time, if it had been construed with a view of criminating its author, in the same way that Mr. Kilham's writings were, it furnished occasion for greater offence than any thing which he had published. The following passages convey a far more sweeping condemnation of the preachers than Mr. Kilham ever pronounced in his pamphlets. Speaking of the ministry, Mr. Bramwell says:—"We want the power of religion among ourselves. This alone can perpetuate the union of love, and then all things would be done in peace and harmony. When were we asked the state of our souls, since we were received into the Connexion? We may be proud, passionate, envious, malicious, covetous, self-willed, brawlers, and triflers, given to jesting, yea, tiplers; we may oppose the real work of God, may turn hundreds out of the way, and yet remain travelling preachers. Whatever we are, when we enter upon the great work of the ministry, we may lose our first love, zeal, faith, patience, hope, yea, every grace, and yet go round the circuit, carrying about the ghost of a preacher, who being dead, yet speaketh. Brethren!—Brethren! is it not time that something should be done to reform ourselves? Have we not for years been labouring for forced unity and external peace, debating on forms and shadows, and thereby departing more from our centre? And could things be brought into unity this way, would it not settle us in formality, and unscripture stillness? Must not the cause be removed before the effects can cease?

On Wednesday, my little girl and I came to Barnsley. There we have many friends. I preached that evening in the Independent Chapel. Yesterday, we met my father and brother, in Doncaster; they took the child to Epworth, and I came here. Two of the trustees forbade me the chapel, but five were on our side. We had a large congregation, and very attentive. I am to preach six days in this neighbourhood, and then go to Epworth. I hope to see Hull in a fortnight, to go from thence, by Pocklington, Pickering, Thirsk, and York, to Leeds; in four weeks I hope to be in that place. Remember me most affectionately to your dear partner, and all the friends. Thank them, whenever you see them, for their kindness to me and mine.

One of the outcasts of Israel, a travelling preacher, Mr. Thos. Shaw, is come to talk with me. I cannot enlarge. I will write whenever I have any thing particular, or spare time. Do you the same—I am, in haste,

Your affectionate servant,

A. KILHAM.

In the month of May, Mr. Kilham appears to have been compelled, by a variety of circumstances which had occurred, to surrender his hopes of the Conference acceding to the proposals which had been so often made, for establishing a constitutional, and, what he believed

The axe must be laid to the root, and then our preaching, conversation, and example, will produce, under God, the principle and effects of faith and love, and we shall all be one in Christ Jesus." In a communication to Mr. Kilham, dated January 20, 1797, Mr. M. Longridge, of Sunderland, thus notices Mr. Bramwell's statement:—"I was much affected with Mr. Bramwell's letter; yet I doubt the propriety of publishing it. Is it not an infinitely greater attack upon the characters of the preachers than any thing you have written? Is it not more unkind?—That is,—your charges amount to a want of vigilance in making or applying rules, but does he not imply 'that immoral characters may knowingly continue amongst the Methodist Conference?' I believe his intentions are very good, and that there is too much reason to suspect there is a decay of zeal; but when he says, 'we may be proud, passionate,' &c., he certainly brings a very strong accusation against the moral character of the preachers; and that in a very different point of view from what either you or the 'Newcastle Address' has done. These manifestly imply, that 'improper rules will produce improper preachers—improper preachers will destroy souls.' But Mr. B. seems to think the 'glory is departed.' I cannot think as he does; yet we have too much cause to mourn." It was confidently expected by some, that Mr. Bramwell would have been tried for writing this letter, at the ensuing Conference; but no notice was taken of the matter.

to be, a scriptural plan, in which the preachers and people should be united, and co-operate in the government of the Connexion; and as this seemed to be the only foundation on which a solid and permanent peace could be built for the societies, both himself, and a great number of individuals in different parts, felt it impossible to continue, with a good conscience, to belong to a community where one class of persons monopolized the authority which ought to be placed in the whole church. A separation appeared, therefore, unavoidable. Mr. Kilham was far from being one of the first to arrive at this conclusion, but when it could no longer be resisted, he gave way, and began to prepare for it. About this time, a chapel which had been occupied by the Baptists, in Leeds, was on sale, and the friends having purchased it, Mr. Kilham preached a sermon at the opening, May 7, 1797, from Eccles., v. chap. and 1st verse, which he published at the request of the hearers, with a short preface, explaining the intentions of the parties in procuring that place of worship, as well as a large room, which had previously been occupied for three years, for the purpose of having the Sacrament administered to the Methodists, and preaching in church hours, which were not then allowed in their own chapels.

During this year, Mr. Kilham, though opposed by the generality, had been in friendly intercourse with several of the preachers, a few of whom encouraged him to proceed as he had done, and professed a determination, if matters were brought to a point in the Connexion, to stand by the cause of liberty and the people. Of that number were Messrs. Bramwell and H. Taylor, then stationed at Sheffield; from whom Mr. Kilham received the following letters, which occasioned him to pay them a visit; and from thence he made a tour, to ascertain the sentiments of his friends in other places.

*Sheffield, May 5, 1797.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

You will wonder at my silence in not answering your kind letter sooner, but the wonder will cease when I tell you that I have been near three weeks from home, and only returned last night. I have been visiting my friends in Liverpool,

Warrington, Preston, Bolton, Blackburn, &c. I most certainly would have complied with your request, had it been in my power, but, strange as it may seem, I never saw the printed paper you mention. Secret publications are as carefully kept from us, as from you. Will you consider me as writing to you in the confidence of friendship, and at the present keep it to yourself? I believe you will, and therefore write freely. By this time, I think you must have lost all expectation of a reform taking place in our Connexion. If you have not, I must own I have. Depend upon it, a large majority of the Conference are determined to risk every thing, rather than make the alterations so much wished for by the people. Methodism can only be preserved, by reducing it to scriptural simplicity, and by uniting preachers and people together by those ties which bound them in the first ages of the gospel. In Methodism there is an excellent outline for this purpose, if it were well filled up; and I think the time is not far distant, when all the preachers who are friends to such a plan, should meet together, and perfectly understand each other on these subjects, and with firmness join together in forming circuits accordingly. This will be lifting up a proper standard for the people, who would flock to it from all parts of the kingdom. A Conference might soon be formed of travelling and worthy local preachers, agreeable to the views of the people. Those who choose might stay with the old Connexion quietly, and the friends of genuine christian liberty, might walk in love, and go on their way rejoicing, and increase daily. A division may take place without those dreadful effects which we sometimes fear. These things have lately been much on my mind. I have committed my thoughts to paper, and if I could see you alone, I would let you see them. Write soon, and tell me all you think of this strange letter, but be sure you keep it to yourself, as I do not yet see the time when we ought to act publicly. It will appear, I think, before long. — Wishing you every blessing,

I am, your's affectionately,

HENRY TAYLOR.

*Sheffield, 11th May, 1797.*

Mr. Bramwell is now in the room with me, and what I now write you must consider as coming from both of us. We want to see you, and indeed we must see you here as soon as possible, and we intreat you, let every other plan give place to this. Your visit to us must be without any

person, directly or indirectly, knowing any thing about it : the nature of the business requires this secrecy, and when you know the particulars, you will be of the same opinion. It may be as well for you to send your friends at Sheffield information of the night you intend to be here, and that you will preach in one of the Dissenting Chapels ; this will be a proper cover for an interview with us ; but you must keep the matter from all your friends here, and from every one : you can easily apologize to them for coming sooner than you expected. We advise you to stay one night only, and for that to be Tuesday or Wednesday. When you have fixed on the night, send me a private letter, and meet us the next morning by four o'clock. Our business we think of such importance, that we wish to see you before our district meeting at Leeds, the 24th instant.—Your's, &c.

H. TAYLOR.

“ After making a few necessary preparations for the journey,” Mr. Kilham states, “ I set off for Sheffield ; the next day I met Mr. Taylor, and early the morning after, I had a secret interview with him and Mr. Bramwell. They both spoke freely on the necessity of a reform, and seemed determined to have this effected or leave the Connexion. I saw the paper they had written on Church government, and dictated some alterations, which had their approbation. They both appeared timorous, but if their professions are deserving of credit, they are determined to have a reform at all events, or to risk the consequences. I preached several times to large congregations, with much satisfaction ; many persons seem resolved to have a redress of grievances, and appear confident that their preachers at Sheffield would either see this effected or separate from the Conference. Nevertheless, I found much reasoning in my own mind on the conduct of Messrs. Bramwell, Taylor, and Emmet,—they appeared so exceedingly afraid of the higher powers. I expressed my fears to one or two particular friends, but they had the fullest reliance on their firmness and integrity. From Sheffield, I went to Nottingham and Birmingham ; when I was at Chesterfield, I was kindly entertained by Mr. Robinson, and spent an afternoon agreeably with a few



friends; in the evening, I preached and explained the state of our Connexion. On my way, I passed about a week at Basford with Mr. Hall, and preached once at Nottingham, and several times in the neighbourhood. While at his house, I had a good deal of conversation with Mr. Hall, upon the general state of our affairs, and found his sentiments in general accorded with my own." Mr. Kilham then proceeded to visit the Staffordshire potteries. "At Hanley," he says, "I had the pleasure of spending several days with some valuable friends; I preached to large congregations in the chapels and out of doors. We have a good opening in these parts. If the preachers will not accede to the measures of reform which have been proposed, many are determined to separate, and build two or three chapels in that neighbourhood." He then went to Liverpool, where the friends of liberty had begun to occupy a chapel of their own, with a determination to act for themselves, in securing what they regarded as being their privileges under the New Testament. Having spent a short time there, he removed to the neighbourhood of Manchester and Ashton, where the recollections of the trials he had recently passed through, rushed upon him with great force. He says, "I found my heart much affected, at seeing the place where the remains of my dear partner were deposited; and the memorial which my friends had placed over her, containing a suitable inscription." The kindness of the people to him was again renewed, with such marks of affection that he could not but be gratified with the repetition of their great goodness. He returned to Leeds in July, and in conjunction with the friends of reform, immediately began to prepare for the Conference which was about to be held in that town, and at which a great number of delegates were expected to attend, with a view to assist in making some settlement with the preachers, which might terminate the differences that had so long disturbed the Connexion.

## CHAPTER IX.

CONFERENCE, 1797. UNSUCCESSFUL NEGOCIATION BETWEEN THE FRIENDS OF LIBERTY AND THE PREACHERS; SEPARATION, AND FORMATION OF THE METHODIST NEW CONNEXION.

It is unnecessary to observe, that the preceding year had been a time of incessant labour and anxiety for Mr. Kilham. He had preached as frequently, perhaps, as if it had been his only employment; not to mention the account of his trial and expulsion, he had, moreover, edited, and was in great part the author of, the "Methodist Monitor," in two volumes, containing between seven and eight hundred pages, which publication would constitute, of itself, sufficient work for a year's literary toil: and in addition to these, the number of letters which he wrote was beyond all computation, as he was obliged to be in daily correspondence on methodistical affairs with persons in every part of the kingdom. In short, he had enough to have occupied three or four persons, and that, too, during the severe affliction and death of his wife, and while travelling from place to place, as circumstances required his presence.

The Conference was held in Leeds, and commenced, as usual, at the latter end of July. By means of the Monitor, Mr. Kilham had diffused an immense mass of information through the societies on disputed points in the Connexion; and consequently, the impression on all sides was, that at this meeting something decisive must be done, as it was admitted to be impossible for the body to continue any longer in its then agitated state. All parties had provided for the struggle as well as they could. The preachers felt the necessity of giving way to a certain extent, but not so as to admit the laity to participate in their legislative

authority, which was the great object sought after by Mr. Kilham and his friends,—as they rationally concluded, that if, on the one hand, this were obtained, every other salutary regulation which might be necessary would follow in due time; while, on the other, if this continued to be withheld, whatever else might be conceded, it would be both unsatisfactory in itself, and uncertain in its tenure;—for so long as the power to alter and make laws for the Connexion remained solely with the preachers, they who gave at one period, could take away at another, which left the privileges of the societies in a state of complete insecurity.

In the early part of the month, Messrs. Mather and Pawson issued a joint address to the preachers, inviting them to fix upon a few preliminaries, as the ground-work of any negotiation which might be entered into with the delegates who should attend Conference in behalf of the Trustees and Societies; and the first thing which they proposed was the following: “We cannot in conscience treat with any who design to make Alexander Kilham’s re-admission as a condition of our union.” A writer, signing himself “A Trustee Delegate,” in a short reply to Messrs. Mather and Pawson, dated Leeds, August 1st, asked, in reference to this point,—If it were a good or scrupulous conscience which led these individuals to prefer continuing the Connexion in a state of agitation for an indefinite period, to the receiving back of Mr. Kilham? and then he appealed to the consciences of the delegates, whether a man who had sacrificed his all to serve them, and had been persecuted and loaded with reproach from Penzance to Inverness, ought to be deserted in the hour of danger. Mr. Kilham had, however, already provided that his friends should be placed in no difficulty on his account, by a voluntary act of disinterestedness, which perfectly accorded with every part of his character and conduct. It had been proposed at several meetings, held for the purpose of appointing delegates to attend at Leeds during the Conference, that justice to him, including a restoration to his former position in the Connexion, should be made a foundation principle

of any arrangement between the preachers and societies; but on hearing of this suggestion, Mr. Kilham at once insisted that nothing relating to himself personally should be made a condition in their negotiation for peace and liberty. He was not only willing for, but required, his individual interests to be left entirely out of the question, and even lost sight of. He expressed himself as content, if a system of equitable church government might be agreed to, which should secure the Christian privileges of all classes of Methodists, both ministers and members;—and his friends were told, they were perfectly free to offer or to accept any terms which they judged to be scriptural, without mixing up his case at all with the matter. Indeed, he would not allow of its being identified with the great objects for which they were contending; so that the proscription of Messrs. Mather and Pawson was as uncalled for, as it seemed to be uncharitable. When such personal feelings as they manifested, are contrasted with his public spirit and self-devotion, Mr. Kilham's disposition and proceedings appear to great advantage.

In May, a long address was drawn up by Mr. Kilham, and being signed by a number of trustees, leaders, stewards, and local preachers, from many societies, it was circulated through the Connexion. It pointed out the unsettled state of Methodism, and showed what would effect a cure from the distractions which then prevailed. The different circuits were requested to examine it, and to appoint delegates to meet in Leeds at the time of the Conference, to use their influence to obtain a redress of grievances: and, if that could not be obtained, to prepare their minds to follow the openings of Divine Providence.

In June, another letter was also circulated from Stockton-on-Tees, sanctioned by the committee who published the Newcastle Address in February, 1796, requesting that trustees, leaders, stewards, and members of the Methodist society, would take into consideration the state of the body, and send delegates to the Conference.

In July, Mr. Stonehouse, of Manchester, by the request of trustees, &c., sent a circular through the

different districts, intreating the friends to send delegates.

These communications, influenced a number to assemble in Leeds at the time appointed. Some of them were deputed by the trustees alone—others by the societies, in conjunction with the trustees—and others by the people, who had either left the Connexion, or were dissatisfied with the rules of the Conference. Several also attended as trustees, without a delegation from the places where they resided.

The individuals nominated had, in some cases, particular counsel given them as to the principles upon which they were to proceed. Those sent from several places (as Ashton-under-Line, Mosley, Red-Hall, &c.) in the Stockport circuit, were to be guided by certain directions with which they were furnished. The following is a copy of the instructions given to Mr. Thornely, who went from Red-Hall:—

“We, the trustees, &c., of Red-Hall, having considered, with the deepest concern, the convulsed situation of the Methodist Connexion, think it the duty of every friend to Methodism to come forward at this important crisis. We therefore wish to contribute our mite towards the establishing of peace and union upon a proper foundation, that preachers and people may again rejoice in worshipping God together.

“In order thereto, we appoint Joseph Thornely (one of the trustees for Red-Hall) to attend at Leeds during the next Conference of preachers, and to join with the other delegates then assembled, and to co-operate with them, in devising a proper plan for bringing about a reform in the present system of Methodism, by strengthening the power of District Meetings, and establishing the right of delegates attending these meetings and the Conference; the delegates to be chosen without the interference of preachers,—to have equal authority with them in the management of all our affairs—to have all our laws or rules clear and explicit, incapable of a double meaning—to bring about the proposed laws, dated Salford, Manchester, November 10th, 1796—to have the case of Mr. Kilham thoroughly and impartially investigated, and a report made, that justice may be done to him without delay. We recommend our delegate to use his utmost efforts to obtain a peaceable reform—to give up every thing that

will not infringe on the rights of trustees and people; but we charge him never to forego the admission of delegates into District and Conference Meetings.

“Should a general division take place, the delegate shall not give his voice either way, till he has sent word to the committee in his circuit, and received their answer.”

The delegates assembled in Leeds were about seventy in number. Lest the reader should misunderstand their precise intentions, it ought to be mentioned, that, though there was a general agreement among them that the preachers should, if practicable, be prevailed on to give up a portion of their power to the laity, the persons deputed were of different sentiments on other points. They may be properly classed under three different heads. First, those who desired to obtain this concession from the preachers, if possible; but in case they could not succeed, they were still willing to submit to the existing system. These, of course, were opposed to a separation being made in the Connexion under any circumstances whatever. Second, such as were determined either to persuade or compel the preachers to renounce what they believed to be an unscriptural and pernicious domination, or felt bound in conscience to assist in the establishment of another Itinerancy, which should be free from this objectionable feature, and founded on the principle of uniting the ministry and societies in every department of its management. The third class of delegates were as anxious as the others to have a reform effected, but they had not made up their minds, nor had the parties by whom they were sent to Leeds, what course to take, in case things were carried to an extremity.

It should also be remarked, that in seeking admission to Conference, the motives of the several delegates, and the objects sought by them to be accomplished thereby, were widely different. A number of trustees deputed to visit Leeds, were of the high church party, who blamed the Conference for having allowed the Sacrament to be administered in the Methodist Chapels, and preaching during church hours: these wished to become members of Conference that they might pre-

vent the continuance of such ordinances, and bring things back to the state in which they existed at the death of Mr. Wesley. These parties were naturally the very warmest opponents of Mr. Kilham, with whom they differed in nearly every thing, except as to the mere introduction of the laity to Conference, and even in this one particular their design was the reverse of his. He desired to extend the privileges of the societies, by putting them in possession of more authority; whereas the high church trustees wanted to have power only as a means of restraining the preachers from conceding any of those things which might give to Methodism the character of being separated from the Church of England.

Mr. Kilham having been more connected with Leeds and its neighbourhood than any other place during the past year, in consequence of the Methodist Monitor, which he had conducted, being printed there, he was regularly appointed by the trustees of the Hunslet Chapel to attend the meeting of delegates on their behalf. But his admission to that meeting was strongly opposed by the high church party, ostensibly, because they professed to regard him as still being a circuit preacher and under the censure of Conference, but really, from a fear that his presence would frustrate some of their purposes. A majority having divided against his being present, lest the preachers should take offence, and make that an excuse for throwing fresh difficulties in the way of coming to any arrangement, Mr. Kilham transmitted his views on several points to the delegates, in a letter from which we make an extract:—

DEAR BRETHREN,

I apprehend there is not a person in your meeting that will question my right to attend. This is clear beyond dispute. Yet I am determined not to claim a place with you, but leave the matter to your better judgment.

I should be thankful, if the brethren would candidly weigh the following particulars. 1. Ever since I began this contest with the preachers, the glory of God, in the prosperity of Methodism, has been the object of my pursuit. Nothing but a conviction of duty, which I could not oppose without guilt,

urged me to the steps which I have taken. If I have erred, the Lord will discover this in due time. 2. You all know, the Conference never charged me with any thing immoral; nor have they attempted to invalidate my right to publish the good tidings of salvation. 3. I believe you are all convinced, that the trials I had last year, both in the district meetings and in the Conference,—where my accusers were my judge and jury,—cannot be justified either by scripture, by argument, or by precedent, in these nations this century. 4. Would the Conference suffer me to have a fair open trial, by a jury from amongst your body, I would cheerfully submit to your decision.—Whether you acquitted or condemned me, I would be satisfied with such a trial. 5. I have no desire to divide the Connexion. If the preachers would only remove existing grievances, and allow the societies to help in managing all their affairs, I should rejoice in their unity and happiness. 6. *If the Conference will grant you all the privileges you have a right to demand, provided I am left out of the question, I should rejoice to be forgotten for ever, if peace on gospel terms could be established.*

Earnestly praying that God may direct your steps in all things, and influence your hearts by his Spirit,

I am, your affectionate servant,

ALEX. KILHAM.

The delegates began to hold their meetings on the first of August, and on the third a motion was carried to request the preachers to admit two or more lay representatives from each district meeting, to meet with them in Conference, and transact the general business of the Connexion. This proposal having been sent in to the Conference of preachers then sitting, it was almost immediately met by a refusal to accede to it. It was then requested that delegates might be admitted into each district meeting, to co-operate with the preachers in the general administration of its affairs; but this was also refused. A third plan, afterwards submitted to the preachers, was, that delegates should be sent from the different circuits to assemble at the time of Conference—not with the preachers, but—in an apartment by themselves, to constitute a second legislative house; and that the sanction of this lay convention should be obtained before any new law or alteration



was rendered valid, and carried into effect. But this last and final suggestion met with a similar reception to the two former; all three being rejected by the Conference, with a clear intimation that the preachers were resolved to retain the supreme governing authority, as heretofore, in their own hands.

At the same time, the Conference consented to revise some of its rules, and several changes were made therein, as to the mode of receiving members into society, expelling them, appointing and removing leaders, stewards, local preachers, &c.; also as to the management of the finances, and holding meetings. These alterations were, on the whole, improvements; but in many instances where concessions seemed to be made, they were so limited by qualifying provisions, and also expressed in terms so capable of being variously construed, that, after all, the power of the superintendent, if warily exercised, might be applied with almost as much absoluteness as ever. This modification of the system was regarded as the completion of the constitution partly agreed to at Conference 1795; and, taken together, the rules made on these two occasions have always been spoken of as the charter of Wesleyan Methodism, under the denomination of "Articles of Pacification."

The Conference having thus cut off all hopes of the societies being allowed to participate in the management of the Connexion, it now remained to be decided what was to be done by those who had assembled to promote the admission of representatives to Conference; and on this subject the reader will have been prepared by what has already been stated, to find that there was a wide difference of opinion among those present from various circuits,—some advocating and others opposing a separation. During the period that the delegates generally had been negotiating with the preachers, a number of those who, from the beginning, entertained no expectations of prevailing with the Conference to allow lay members to enter that assembly, had been employed (in conjunction with other friends of like sentiments who were not officially appointed

to act with them, and therefore not permitted to take any part in their meetings, but were attending in Leeds to witness the result of the present proceedings,) in making conditional arrangements for another Itinerancy. These individuals were consequently prepared to declare themselves so soon as the determination of the preachers, respecting the plans submitted by the meeting of delegates, became fully known. Immediately, therefore, that the communication from Conference, rejecting lay assistance, was received, an official announcement was made by this party to Conference, the substance of which was as follows:—

DEAR FATHERS AND BRETHREN,

We came to Leeds with no other design than to seek the glory of God, in the future prosperity of Methodism. When the major part of the trustee-meeting did not think proper to admit several of our friends to meet with them, we thought it necessary to meet together, to converse upon such subjects as the present state of our affairs suggested.—However, lest any should declare, that our meeting was an avowed separation, without any provision for future unity, we mutually agreed to draw up, and preface what we should attend to, by the following declarations:—

“At a meeting of the people’s delegates, held at Leeds, the third of August, 1797, in Ebenezer chapel, it was unanimously agreed,—That the meeting should proceed to organize their plan of future conduct, according to the utmost of their ability and information; and that all their decisions should remain in full force until the issue of the committee of preachers and delegates should be known; but if the issue of that meeting should be favourable to our views, all the proceedings of this evening, in regard to making provisions for a new Itinerancy, should be null and void.”

When the preachers rejected the proposal from the trustees, and refused to admit delegates from the district into the Conference, our hopes of reconciliation languished: but when we heard the result of the meeting held between a committee of delegates and some of the preachers, we were conscious that nothing could restore peace and unity, without the singular interposition of Divine Providence. But as all things are possible with God, we have agreed to send in to the Conference the particulars we have drawn up and agreed to, for our future conduct. If the preachers can unite with

us, upon this, or a similar plan, we shall exceedingly rejoice, but if they are resolved not to do it—we must divide; because all that we propose appears to be founded on the scriptures, and is in every respect both reasonable and just.

Signed in behalf of the Friends,

JOHN SHORE.

The preceding notification to Conference was accompanied by a series of regulations, agreeing in substance with what Mr. Kilham had laid down in the "Progress of Liberty," to which we have already referred, (see page 236,) and which constituted the basis of the Methodist New Connexion. The Conference replied to this by the following note, together with a copy of the rules as altered according to the Articles of Pacification.

DEAR BRETHREN,

We received your letter, and it was read in the Conference, and the enclosed is the answer. In behalf of the Conference we are affectionately, your's, &c.,

T. COKE, President.

S. BRADBURN, Secretary.

*Leeds, August 5, 1797.*

This was intended as the ultimatum of the Conference, and being so regarded by the parties receiving it, a separation was formed forthwith; and after a general meeting of the delegates, convened in Ebenezer chapel, had concluded, the friends who were favourable to a plan of church government which should unite the clergy and laity, assembled in the same place on the evening of the 9th of August, 1797, and decided upon the adoption of that principle. Mr. Thom, (who had sent in his resignation to Conference the moment that the proposal to admit representatives had been finally rejected,) having been chosen president, and Mr. Kilham secretary, steps were immediately taken to organise a new plan. There were only two preachers, besides Mr. Thom,\* who se-

\* Mr. Thom was a mild, considerate, judicious man, and deservedly held in great esteem by all who knew him. He had not taken an active part in the discussions which preceded the separation, but, with his characteristic prudence, he silently weighed the subjects in dispute, without prematurely committing himself in any way to either party. When the final resolution of Conference was taken, not to admit dele-

ceded from the Conference on the separation taking place, viz., Mr. S. Eversfield and Mr. A. Cummins. In addition to these, Messrs. Bramwell, H. Taylor, and M. Emmett, had afforded every reason to expect they would join the new Itinerancy, and Mr. Taylor had even tendered his resignation along with Mr. Thom—but, when the matter came to a point, all the three relinquished the cause, which, up to that instant, they had done their utmost to promote. Several others, who were not circuit preachers, but had taken an active part against the Conference, also turned their backs at this crisis upon the principles which they had strenuously advocated; and, as Mr. Kilham, the year before, had been personally deserted by many professed friends on his trial, so now, a similar abandonment took place in reference to the system which he and they had been seeking to establish, as alike agreeable to reason and the New Testament. In reference to the state of things at this juncture, Mr. Kilham writes as follows:—

“Some of the friends expressed their fears, and others were quite discouraged at the irresolution and duplicity that appeared in many of the preachers, on whose professions they had relied; and many, seeing our weakness, went back, and walked no more with us. We were brought low indeed, but the Lord helped us at

gates from the societies into its meetings, Mr. Thom, who had previously made up his mind conditionally, immediately sent in his resignation, which was expressed in very respectful terms; and, still professing his affection for his brethren with whom he had laboured as a minister for twenty-two-years, he conscientiously withdrew from that community, to co-operate with others whose views of church government accorded with his own, and were, as he believed, consistent with scripture. Mr. Thom travelled six years as a preacher in the Methodist New Connexion, and then became editor of the Magazine, and book-steward, having been appointed to those offices by the Conference. He continued therein until Dec. 16, 1811, when he died at Shooter's Hill, in the Staffordshire Potteries, the residence of Wm. Bailey, Esq., who had kindly invited him to his house for the benefit of his health. Among Mr. Kilham's papers, are a number of Mr. Thom's letters, chiefly relating to the business of the Connexion on its first formation, all of which discover a sound discriminating mind, and a christian temper and moderation, which fully account for the deference paid to his judgment by his friends, as well as for the respect in which his memory has been held by those who remember him.

the time of our extremity. I still found encouragement from God, and exhorted the brethren to cast their care on Him. We bore up our heads in the midst of the storm, and found the Lord to be our refuge and deliverer. When we had time for recollection, and had calmly recovered ourselves, a plan was made for supplying those societies that requested our assistance. We necessarily laboured under many inconveniences for want of preachers; but in this the God of Jacob was our protection and defence.—Our local brethren stepped forward, and engaged to assist us as much as possible. We now formed the places into circuits as well as we could, and devised a scheme for future movements; many of our brethren then began to revive, and to trust that the Lord would cause us to see better days. The most bitter persecuting sermons were preached against us, and some of the preachers whom we had left represented us as the offscouring of all things. It was deemed advisable for me by all means to go over to Sheffield before the Conference was entirely broken up, for the Conference was sending the preachers in every direction to give us all the opposition in their power. I therefore set off, and though it was nine o'clock at night when I arrived, I attended a meeting at which five hundred persons were present. The next morning, I preached at Howard-street chapel, and in the afternoon at Mr. Briant's chapel, in Scotland-street. After preaching, I met about 600 of the society. The next day the leaders and local preachers, who had determined to unite with us, met together at twelve o'clock, when we conversed freely to each other, and I laid our plan before them; after preaching again in the evening, and having had further conversation with the leaders, I determined to return to Leeds the next day."

As soon as they had separated themselves from the Wesleyan Conference, the first business of those preachers and delegates present at Leeds, who had seceded, was to adopt a few principles as the basis of a constitution which would unite the ministry and laity in every department of the body,—leaving it to the next Conference, to be composed of preachers and repre-

sentatives chosen by the societies, to enter into details, to fix upon particular rules, and to organise the system generally. There was only time for this at the outset ; nor, perhaps, would it have been proper to have done any thing besides making temporary arrangements to supply with preaching such places as had declared themselves in favour of the new plan. The principal of these were Leeds, Sheffield, Nottingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Chester, Macclesfield, Bolton, Ashton, Stockport, Hanley, Newcastle, Alnwick, &c., comprising, in the whole, about five thousand members. The great difficulty felt was, to provide a sufficient number of preachers, which was met as far as possible, by stationing as many as had offered their services, and appointing a committee to arrange with others who might be willing to help ; the local preachers also rendered very important assistance until travelling preachers could be obtained,—many of them preaching regularly two, three, or even four or five times in the week, and travelling from ten to fifty miles,—thereby giving ample evidence that their hearts were in the work.

In coming to the determination to establish a new section of Methodists, as the only means left of securing that degree of liberty for which he had been contending, but which was denied to the members by those from whom they had separated, it appears to have been the design of Mr. Kilham thenceforward to desist from controversy with his late brethren, and to proceed peaceably forward in the path marked out for his own usefulness in the church of Christ. And to furnish right notions on the subject, as well as to promote a spirit of charity and religion among the members of the Methodist New Connexion, he published in the last number of the "Monitor" a paper signed "Servetus," of which he was the author, faithfully inculcating such a disposition and conduct as showed that, though he had strenuously contended for many things of importance in a secondary sense, he was most of all concerned that by living a holy and useful life, they should approve themselves both to God and man. A few passages

from this address will fully exemplify and bear out our meaning. Mr. Kilham says,—

“As a division has actually taken place, there are several things which ought to be considered for the general good. If they are candidly examined, they may, under the blessing of God, be attended with advantage to the reader.

“The first thing we should carefully attend to, is, that our motives be pure. Jesus Christ informs us, if our eye be single, our whole body shall be full of light. If we have nothing in view but to check the influence of the preachers—to set up an independent church against them—to be at the head of a party—to obtain temporal advantage, or be avenged of any that have opposed us, our eye is not single—our motives are not pure. On the other hand, if the glory of God—the peace of our own souls—the welfare of our christian brethren—spreading the gospel, and bringing sinners to the Lord Jesus, are the objects which influence our conduct, then our eye is single, and he that searcheth the heart, reads our intentions, and is privy to all our desires.

“2. We should secondly examine our cause, to know whether it be according to God or not. A man may have pure motives, and yet have a bad cause. If we have pure motives and a good cause, we have nothing to fear. What we have long pleaded for, appears so reasonable, that we are astonished how any men should attempt to withhold from us our just rights, as the followers of the Son of God.

“3. Support your cause by argument, and not by calumny. It is easy to call names, and to load those who differ from us with reproach; but when nothing is advanced in support of a cause, but mere declamation, and bitterness and wrath supply the want of meekness and patience, we are moved to pity the declaimer, and to beseech God to be gracious to his soul. Show your opponents that both reason and scripture require, that preachers and people ought to act in unison together. Both ought to unite, and to walk together in love. Be kind and affectionate; exercise all the graces belonging to your profession one towards another, that God may be glorified. If others are determined to use bitter language, and suffer themselves to be led aside by tempers which reproach their profession, let us be careful that we do not fall into the same snare.

“4. Let us not be earnest in seeking to proselytize our brethren. If they examine for themselves the subjects which

have agitated us, and plead with God for direction, he will show them what is his good, and acceptable, and perfect will. If our brethren, with whom we have formerly walked, can give us the right hand of fellowship, we ought to rejoice. But if they are not convinced that our's is the most excellent way, it would be wrong to attempt to force them into our measures.

"5 Avoid anxiety about a great increase of numbers. If we are but few in number, we should all be of one heart and soul; and we shall find that God will dwell in the midst of us. When any sect or party are more anxious to increase their numbers, than they are to have suitable members for christian society, we cannot suppose they are walking in the most excellent way. But if we seek an increase of numbers from pure motives, the Lord will cause his goodness to pass before us, and grant us the desire of our hearts.

"We shall have several difficulties to encounter. But nothing can harm us while we disinterestedly follow that which is good. Perhaps our greatest difficulties may arise from the following considerations :

"1. Very few, if any popular preachers, are come out to our help.

"2. The rich and great, in many of the societies, are opposed to you.

"3. The prejudices of many run high. They talk of the good old way—the old tried ground—the old ship—and positively declare none ever prospered that left the Connexion.

"4. Reproach and persecution are manifest from quarters we did not expect.

"5. But these things ought not to move us. If God be for us, who can be against us? If the Lord stand by and help, we have nothing to fear.—Let us cast our care upon Him, knowing that He careth for us.

"If we attend to the following particulars, we shall never be moved :—1. Let us live near to God. Let us seek to glorify God in our body and spirit, which are his, and determine to know nothing among men, but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

"2. Let us be careful whom we admit into society. Persons may embrace our liberal sentiments, and wish to give us the right-hand of fellowship, whose lives are immoral. We should guard against sin. If we are but few in number, and sincere in our profession, the Lord will bless us.—But,



if we are many, and have persons united with us whose lives will disgrace their principles, the spirit of God will be grieved, and his influence withheld from our worship. The preachers have been too anxious for numbers. This has greatly injured the work. Let us learn wisdom by what they have suffered. If all who join us are sincere, God, even our own God, will dwell with, and in us for ever.

“3. Let us be careful whom we admit to exercise in public. Let us not push forward those who may have zeal without knowledge.

“4. Follow truth and peace with all men. Let the truth as it is in Jesus be your first object, and peace the second. Determine to place these before you in all your engagements. Sacrifice every thing that stands in their way. Resolve to suffer the loss of all things, rather than renounce them.

“5. Never make the pulpit a vehicle of abuse. A good cause needs not bad tempers to support it. Abusive language may irritate, but it wounds and distresses those who are sincere. Bless those that curse you. Do good to those who hate you; and, unless in cases of absolute necessity, let neither the pulpit nor the press be employed in mentioning these subjects. When necessity requires this service at your hands, let it be done in such terms as cannot justly offend any candid follower of the Son of God.

“6. Follow the openings of Divine Providence. If your work and counsel be of God, he will open the way before you.

“7. Lastly, let prayer ascend to God continually, for his blessing to attend you in all your undertakings.”

It seems much to be regretted, when a separation had actually taken place, and each party could adhere to a system, whether the old or the new, which it preferred as being the best, that all animosity was not immediately set aside, and a resolution formed to love as brethren, and manifest a deportment towards each other compatible with the spirit of the gospel and those great principles of Christianity which all, on both sides, equally maintained in common. The preceding extracts evince Mr. Kilham's desire for this; it appears, indeed, from his private memoranda as well as by his more public professions, that, before the division occurred, he had

become weary of contention, and that he continued the controversy merely as a duty which he owed to truth, and in the hope that, shortly, some decision would be come to which might end the strife—either by the preachers so far reforming the plan, as to enable him to resume his work among them with satisfaction, or by the Conference doing some act which should extinguish all expectations of those changes being effected in the body, which, he was convinced, justice to the laity, and the Scriptures, alike required. In the first of these alternatives, Mr. Kilham would have rejoiced exceedingly, as it might have re-united him with that community from which he had been cut off; and in the latter, he had decided in his own mind, either to settle as a minister over one congregation, or to take his lot with those, who, agreeing with the views he held on church government, might resolve upon instituting a New Methodist Itinerancy;—but in any case, he anxiously longed for peace, and to be allowed quietly to proceed on his way as a minister of the gospel, whose only business was to save souls. His anticipations were, however, soon disappointed. Instantly upon the division, and before Mr. Kilham and his friends had time to act as a body, they found themselves branded, by the Conference publishing them to the three kingdoms and America, as almost every thing which was bad; and, moreover, it was attempted to render them objects of suspicion to government, if not indeed to bring the civil power to act against them, by representing their sentiments as being identical with the republicanism which then prevailed in France and elsewhere. This was not likely to be endured silently, by Mr. Kilham especially, who embraced an opportunity offered by the publication of the “Articles of a Constitution for the Methodist New Connexion” (written conjointly by himself and Mr. Thom), of annexing the vindictive insinuations of the Conference Minutes, with his own refutations of the charges therein made against himself and his brethren who had separated. The following are the passages which Mr. Kilham replied to. In addressing the American Methodists the Conference says:—

“In the midst of all, we have experienced some violent convulsions. For some have arisen, who, under the pretence of liberty, (but in reality making it a cloak for licentiousness) and from the desire of being the heads of a party, endeavour to overturn our itinerancy and discipline, and to destroy them root and branch. We may truly, in the proper scriptural sense, apply those words of the apostle to them : ‘They went out from us, but they were not of us : for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us : but they went out that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.’—However, they have been but too successful in drawing disciples after them : and though they have been sowing the seeds of discord for two years past, their plan has been but just brought to maturity ; and they are now exerting themselves to the utmost of their power, to scatter and destroy the flock. But we have a full confidence, that the Great Governor of the church is on our side : and if so, who can be against us ? Nevertheless, it is our duty to use every prudential means to stem the torrent, as well as pray mightily to God for his assistance.”

Mr. Kilham, after quoting the preceding, says,—“Upon this passage I shall make the following remarks : 1. The Conference have unchristianized all who leave them. The text they quote, they say, ‘Is applied in its proper and scriptural sense.’ If this be true, we have always been hypocrites, and therefore have gone out from them that we might be made manifest to the world. The plain grammatical sense of their expressions leads us to consider, that the Conference firmly believed that all who have left them never were christians. What sort of charity must they possess, who can thus apply the scriptures to those who refuse to walk any longer with them ? 2. They represent us as barefaced hypocrites. We only pretend liberty as a cloak for licentiousness, that we may be able to accomplish our purpose. I would ask the Conference, and all the world, whether we are encouraging licentiousness or not, in any of our measures ? 3. We are charged with attempting to be heads of a party, and ‘endeavouring to overturn our itinerancy root and branch.’ So far from this being the case, we are striving to establish a plan that will not admit of any head but Christ. Lordship, or headship, will be discarded by us. We shall be brethren : and instead of seeking to ‘destroy itinerancy and discipline root and branch,’ we are seeking to establish both on a scriptural, rational foundation. 4.

We are represented as exerting ourselves to 'the utmost of our powers to scatter and destroy the flock.' This charge is extremely uncharitable. We are striving to feed the flock, and to save the world."

The following paragraph, which is taken from the address of the Conference to the Irish preachers, was, if possible, more unjustifiable than the preceding, considering the time when it was published; and the associating of those who had left with the name of Paine, notorious for his infidelity, as well as for his levelling political principles, was a great wrong—we had almost said, an outrage, utterly unworthy of an assembly of near 200 ministers of the Gospel. The words of the Conference to which we allude are these:—

"We thank you for sympathizing with us on account of the contentions which have so injured our Connexion. The Lord has been with us, and over-ruled all for the best. A division has taken place; but in the gentlest manner we could expect: only three travelling preachers have left us! We shall lose all the turbulent disturbers of our Zion—all who have embraced the sentiments of Paine, and place a great part of their religion in contending for (what they call) liberty. The vine which the Lord has planted among us with his own right hand, needed to pass through this pruning and purgation. At the same time, all our watchfulness and diligence should be employed, that the wheat may not be destroyed with the tares. For the loss of the latter we have reason to be thankful to God."

Mr. Kilham notices these imputations as follows:—  
 "Upon this passage I shall remark,—1. The Conference have represented all who join the new Itinerancy as tares—as turbulent disturbers of Zion—as disciples of Paine—as acting under the influence of the devil—and placing a great part of their religion in contending for liberty. Did that charity that thinketh no evil dictate this passage? Thousands, who have united together in the new Itinerancy, have ornamented their profession for a number of years. While they were subject in all things to the preachers, they were considered as the excellent of the earth. They now are living to the glory of God, and walking worthy of their great vocation. If Jesus Christ have any wheat on earth, they are a part of it; they have refused to place implicit faith in their teachers, and despised the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance. They lawfully contended for their privileges, and when they could not prevail, they quietly

withdrew, and joined the New Connexion. They have neither discovered turbulent tempers, nor a turbulent conduct."

"It seems extremely cruel, to desire the civil powers may be awakened against us. If wishing that oppression and corruption may be banished from the universe; that war, with all its horrid consequences, may cease for ever,—and that peace and good will may attend all mankind, be a crime,—we are guilty, and glory in our guilt. We love our king and country.\* We peaceably submit to the law. We seek and pray for the happiness of these nations. And we resolve to lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. There are thousands in the Old Connexion of the

\* This is perhaps the proper place to say a few words in regard to Mr. Kilham's political opinions, which, like other parts of his conduct, were greatly misrepresented at the time of the separation, as, indeed, they have been since, with a view to create prejudice against himself and the community to which he belonged. Instead of enumerating in detail the political principles of Mr. Kilham, we may observe, for the sake of brevity, and also to render them better understood at the present day, that they were of the reforming Whig character, the same as those held by Earl Grey, Lord Erskine, Mr. Fox, &c., and which, though unpopular with the higher and more influential classes 40 years ago, are now generally recognized as constituting the soundest bases whereon to rest not only the liberty of the subject, but the security of the throne itself. We have Mr. Kilham's own authority for associating his opinions with those of the eminent personages just named. He was stationed in the Newcastle circuit when Charles (now Earl) Grey, who then represented Northumberland, attended a county meeting at Morpeth in 1792, in favour of parliamentary reform. A few days before the meeting took place, Mr. Kilham wrote a letter signed "Independent," addressed to Mr. Grey, and published, we believe, in the newspapers. In this letter, he expressed his approval of the reforms sought to be obtained, and his conviction that they would neither lead to republicanism nor to the downfall of the state, but would have the contrary effect. About three years after that period, when Mr. Kilham was in Aberdeen, a woman belonging to the Methodist Society, having been deserted by her husband, traced him to be in the service of the Hon. Thomas (afterwards Lord) Erskine; and as she was sick, if not in actual want of the necessities of life, Mr. Kilham was made acquainted with her case, and wrote to that distinguished individual to state the circumstances on her behalf. The trials of Hardy, Thelwall, and several others, who were prosecuted by government on account of the part they had taken in promoting reform, had recently been concluded; and Mr. Erskine having defended the accused parties, Mr. Kilham took occasion, in his letter, to thank him for the service which he had in those instances rendered to the public liberty, as well as for his other patriotic exertions in the House of Commons. Mr. Erskine's autograph reply being before us, we copy it, as being

same mind and spirit. They are as much the disciples of Paine as we are. Perhaps two thirds of the Conference are the same in sentiment and profession, though they hold out different colours, now that they want to excite the secular arm against us. God is our witness, that politics are not our object, any farther than they are connected with christianity. They are never mentioned in our meetings. They are hardly ever named in private conversation. We are not afraid of having all our conduct examined before any magistrate, or number of magistrates. We are as loyal to our King and the nation, as those who raise a hue and cry against us. While they have recourse to the disgraceful shift of attempting to bring us under the influence of reproach and persecution, we have recourse to the Lord Je-

highly honourable to his humanity, as well as for the notice which it contains of Mr. Kilham's reference to politics :—

*London, Feb. 28, 1795.*

SIR,—John Nichol, the husband of the poor woman mentioned in your letter, is just dead. He lived with me a great many years, and was very faithful and affectionate. I am sorry for the neglect of duty in the manner you mention. He had, when he died, 9 guineas in money and a watch, which he delivered to one of my servants to be sent to his wife; and at the time I received your letter, I was making enquiry where she was to be found, which I am glad to learn correctly from your letter. I will take the earliest opportunity of remitting them to her; and you may therefore safely, in the meantime, supply her with what her necessities, more especially at this rigorous season, may require, and I will send the money to you to deliver to her. I will also take an opportunity soon of sending her something from myself.

I am much obliged to you for the kind manner in which you estimate my humble exertions for the protection of innocence and the public liberty. There never was, perhaps, a season in which the exertion of every man in his station to resist oppression and corruption, has become a more solemn duty.

I am, Sir,

Your most humble servant,

T. ERSKINE.

We have preferred to exemplify Mr. Kilham's political views by the preceding facts, as they appeared likely to be more satisfactory and conclusive than any abstract statement on the subject; though his own declarations in the passage which we have quoted from his answer to the Conference, would be sufficient to clear him and his brethren, so falsely accused, of being the disciples of Paine. He was no more a revolutionist than either Mr. Grey or Mr. Erskine, who were themselves often loaded with the reproach which, at that time, was attempted to be attached to every man, strenuous in maintaining what, in reality, were nothing else than the true principles of the British constitution, in opposition to a party then in power, who endeavoured to infuse therein a portion of the spirit of continental despotism. [See also a subsequent note, page 348.]

hovah ; and determine to cast our soul and our all into his hands. We fear no evil, because God is with us. His rod and his staff comfort us. We bless him for his mercies, and find the Captain of our salvation with us. We adore him for counting us worthy to suffer for his sake. To him we commend ourselves and our cause, not fearing but he will help and bless, even to the end.

A. KILHAM."

The publication of such serious charges as the preceding, which struck at the root of the piety and civil integrity of the parties assailed, in a solemn document like that of the Minutes of Conference, was no trifling injury to the Methodist New Connexion in the beginning ; especially as it had no adequate means of setting the public right on the subject. For although Mr. Kilham did all in his power to remove these imputations, he could not carry the remedy to the extent to which the evil had been spread, nor yet counteract the personal influence exerted against him. There was no alternative, therefore, but for himself and the New Connexion to wait for justice until intemperate feelings should have subsided, and, by the slow process of time and other circumstances, the real character and principles of the body became fully developed.

The division in the Methodist Connexion, as already stated, took place on the 9th of August ; and the members of the new Itinerancy having sat in Conference two days, to arrange, with the utmost despatch, those matters which were indispensable, and required immediate attention, the meeting separated on the 11th, when Mr. Kilham being stationed for Sheffield, went to that circuit, after having remained in Leeds a few days, while the first Minutes of Conference were prepared and printed.

It is probable that his feelings, when relieved from the suspense in which he had been so long held as to the final issue of the contest which had been going on, were those of self-gratulation ; and for the moment he was apparently like one who had entered into rest ; but he soon found his labours so increased as to have become greater than ever.

## CHAPTER X.

MR. KILHAM'S LABOURS IN THE METHODIST NEW CONNEXION  
FROM AUGUST, 1797, TO DECEMBER, 1798.

MR. KILHAM'S popularity was very great at Sheffield, and he was received with open arms by numbers on being appointed there at the commencement of the New Connexion. It was not possible, however, for him actually to spend half his time in his own circuit; indeed, wherever he had been nominally fixed, his presence being frequently required to help in the difficulties which occur at the formation of new societies, his services must necessarily have been distributed among many places. He made the following entry in his diary on going to Sheffield:—

“My soul exceedingly rejoiced in the Lord, and I found myself quickened and comforted: I had strong confidence of the Lord's approbation of our measures, and found great peace from the prospect of success, and the prosperity of our cause.

“When I had regulated a few affairs relative to the society, I went to attend a meeting of our friends at Manchester; I proceeded first to Ashton, which place I reached just at the time for preaching. I was exceedingly fatigued, but found great satisfaction in preaching to many of my old friends, and in recollecting their former love and esteem: the next evening, Mr. Thom preached at Manchester, and the day after we held a public meeting, to consider on the best plan of forming the circuits, and of supplying the societies in those parts of the kingdom.

“When I returned to Sheffield, I was comforted at the reception I met with from the friends.”

Mr. Kilham was naturally looked up to from all quarters, and expected to render assistance in every



arrangement connected with the establishment of a new cause. The correspondence which he has left would justify us in saying that he was absolutely worried by applications, and if he could have divided himself into a hundred parts, when thus multiplied, he would still have been incompetent to fulfil all the engagements which were continually attempted to be forced upon him. The numerous letters he received, and the representations made in so many instances, that unless he were personally present, nothing could be done effectually for the New Connexion, were enough to have distracted and harassed him to death. Yet he never uttered a word of dissatisfaction, nor put any restraint upon himself, but laboured night and day, with all his might, to carry the burthen which he considered was placed upon him by Providence. The idea of promoting the salvation of souls, and securing the christian liberties of the church, reconciled him to all the fatigues and sufferings which he had to pass through in the performance of his duties.

Had there been no other claims upon him than those belonging to Sheffield, his exertions, as appears by the following letters to Mr. Harrop, of Ashton, would have been sufficiently great—too great, indeed, for his strength; but, besides his own circuit, the applications from other places for advice and assistance were so numerous, as to create a weight of care which was almost unsupportable.

*Sheffield, 23rd September, 1797.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have had so much labour and writing since I saw you, as entirely to prevent me from sending you a few lines sooner, and for near a fortnight I have been very much distressed with sickness at my stomach, and want of sleep. The labour is so great here, that none could go through what I have to encounter, unless his bones were like brass, and his flesh like iron. We have increased so much lately, that our chapel is quite too small; I think it may be said in truth, that I never preach on Sunday morning at eight, or a work night, without having about 1500 hearers, and on Sunday evenings we do not know what to do. Our society in

Sheffield is very large, and we have many joining us in the country places—above twenty places have been provided in the country. The people are ready to pull me to pieces, to go to see them—I go as much as possible, but cannot visit them all at present. I must have some person to help, or they will help me into a world of spirits. The people beg of me to spare myself; but how is it possible, when the harvest is so white already? I hope God will give me health, and make his face to shine upon us more gloriously than ever. We have blessed meetings. The people taste of the good word of life, and of the powers of the world to come. There is a general quickening in the old members; and about 50 new ones, with backsliders, have come forward to our help. Many have been awakened and set at liberty. We have the power of God present to heal in our public exercises. Last Sunday I was in the circuit, while the people crowded into the town to hear a local brother deliver to them the word of salvation.

We have very good singing—the chapel rings from end to end. Should you come this way soon, we should be happy to see you.

We have good accounts from Nottingham.

I hope you will not fail to write soon, as I want to hear how you are going forward;—tell me all the particulars, that my heart may rejoice. I hope we shall never be a rich people—if we are, the devil will be sure to show himself in some form, and then, farewell religion. I trust God will neither give us poverty nor riches, but his grace and peace for ever more. My love to all, as though named—God bless and keep you for ever.

A. KILHAM.

*Sheffield, 28th October, 1797.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I received your lines and the manuscripts\* soon after they were safe in Sheffield. Since that piece was read here, our adversaries have not been able to lift up their head against us. The Lord has blessed us with prosperity, and we have rejoiced abundantly in his love. The people continue to come over to us. O that we had a heart to praise God sufficiently for all his mercies.!

\* Alluding to a refutation of some slanderous imputations which had been circulated with a view to injure the New Connexion.

We have just found a suitable preacher for Ireland, who will pass through Manchester on Tuesday week, if nothing prevent; and another for Northumberland;—the latter belonged to this circuit. He is gone out in the following order; first, all the local preachers to an individual recommended him, and secondly, the leaders. Last Monday night he preached to a large congregation—the society stopped after the public service, and several belonging to the Old Connexion and others continued—I told them what had been done at the previous meetings, and as they had heard him, it remained with them either to confirm, or set aside the steps we had taken—they unanimously rose to sanction his going out, and when the question was reversed, not one stood up to oppose him. He is gone forth in the name of God, being commended by the prayers of the people to his paternal care.

I have received a letter from Leeds, informing me that they are almost fast for money in the printing line—they beg of me to help them—I cannot help, unless my friends\* can help me. I wish you could make it convenient to give me a good lift—If you could see brother George Beaumont, perhaps he would help a little also, and our good friend Wood of Bolton. I have written to Mr. Heamer on the subject, as it respects Manchester. I am to be in Leeds next Saturday, and continue there for two or three days—if you could make it convenient to see friends Beaumont and Wood, I know they will do all they can; do help this once, that I may pay part of my debts, and assist them. I have had some money to advance to relieve my brethren, and should rejoice to be able to assist on the present occasion; the money will be lent to them, and heaven must be my security, for any thing I know.

I should be happy to see you, but at present I must not go so far, unless I make an excursion to Hull while I am at Leeds. My friends here are not willing to spare me many days, unless Mr. Thom come over to assist. Whenever I can afford a little time, I shall rejoice to spend a few days in Lancashire, if a way opens. Let us only live near to God, and he will bless us abundantly in his love.

\* The individuals here referred to had taken charge of the books which Mr. Kilham had sent for sale in different places, and the application here made is for a remittance on account, that he might be able to day the printer's bill, as well as to afford assistance to others.

I have not time to enlarge. Our new constitution proposed for your examination, &c., is in the press.

I am,

Your affectionate servant,

A. KILHAM.

The concluding sentence of the last letter, referred to a pamphlet which appeared under the following title,—“Outlines of a Constitution, proposed for the Examination, Amendment, and Acceptance of the Members of the Methodist New Itinerancy, by Wm. Thom and Alex. Kilham.” This publication was in consequence of a request, made by the delegates at Leeds, that Messrs. Thom and Kilham would draw up, in an ample form, the principles on which it was determined to establish a new Connexion of Methodists, that they might be circulated in the different societies, who would thereby have the means, as well as time, for maturely considering the subject, preparatory to the adoption of specific rules at the next annual meeting, to be held at Sheffield at Whitsuntide, 1798.

In applying a remedy to particular evils, from which individuals have suffered injury, there is often a temporary disposition to run to a contrary extreme; and, judging from the replies made to some of his letters, Mr. Kilham was not, perhaps, entirely free from this danger. He had seen, for example, much selfishness among, and the ministerial authority abused by, persons in the sacred office; and when providing adequate protection for non-official members of society, he partly entertained the project of not having stipendiary teachers at all, in order to escape the pernicious consequences of that exclusive spirit which is too often associated with spurious official dignity. This change was never, that we are aware of, formally propounded to the New Connexion, but the idea was certainly at one period in Mr. Kilham's mind, and was mentioned to several of his correspondents; but no countenance appears to have been given to it by them, and it was therefore abandoned. After the utility of having individuals entirely set apart to the pastoral duties of preaching the Gospel, and overseeing the flock of Christ, has been so

generally experienced for many centuries ; and, on the contrary, since there has been an uniform failure to do good on an extensive scale, without such an order of men in the church, it would be superfluous labour to enter further into this subject, except just to remark, that the motive, however inexpedient it might have been to have acted upon it, was another proof of Mr. Kilham's disinterestedness ; inasmuch as it shows, that, while exercising his talents in the service of religion, he was willing to concur in a plan which should require him, like the Apostle Paul, to seek his maintenance independently of any contribution from the church, so as not to be a burden to any one.

It might have been expected that when the charge, already noticed, of disloyalty on the part of Mr. Kilham and those who had separated with him from the Conference, had been met by so unequivocal a denial, the accusation, if not directly withdrawn, would never have been repeated. Yet the following passage, in a letter from Mr. Thom to Mr. Kilham, shews that this unjust attempt to fix a stigma upon the New Connexion was persevered in. Mr. Thom says,—“ Dr. Coke\*

\* It will be recollected that Dr. Coke was President, and Mr. Bradburn Secretary of the Conference, 1797, when the allegation of republicanism was first made against the New Connexion at the division. Now it is curious to think, that if, instead of the Conference preferring such a charge against Mr. Kilham and his friends, the case had been reversed, and those who separated had imputed the same thing to the Wesleyans, there were not, perhaps, two individuals in the body whose conduct could have been cited so successfully to countenance the charge, as Dr. Coke's and Mr. Bradburn's. A fact or two will confirm this statement. First, in regard to Dr. Coke,—When the independence of America had been effectually asserted against England, and peace was concluded, Dr. Coke was sent over by Mr. Wesley to ordain Methodist preachers in the United States. While the Doctor was in America, it was deemed expedient for the Methodists to present a congratulatory address to General Washington and the Congress. In this address, they praised God for freeing them from their oppressors ; for bringing about such a glorious revolution ; for the great privileges they enjoyed under the new constitution ; professed the warmest attachment to the republican government ; and finally prayed that it might be preserved inviolate for ever. It was signed, in behalf of the Methodists, by Francis Ashbury, the superintendent for America ; and by Thomas Coke, then on a mission from England. Dr. Coke returned home shortly after this address had been presented ; but before his arrival, an American newspaper was put

has been at Liverpool, and told the congregation that he foretold the division many years ago; yea, prayed for it; and, to close all, he assured them the New Connexion were republicans, &c."

Another report concerning the New Connexion, was, that it was fast wasting away, and that the parties who had left the old body were returning. This rumour having been traced to Sheffield, by Mr. Thom, who was supplying at Hull, he wrote to Mr. Kilham to enquire into its truth. Mr. Thom says,—

"A letter from Sheffield was read in the Leaders' Meeting, at the old Chapel, last time the preacher met them, informing them that a great number were gone back at Sheffield, and thanks were returned to heaven. If you will state the matter to me, by return of post, I shall make a proper use of it here."

into Mr. Wesley's hands, containing the address to Washington, signed by Dr. Coke and Mr. Ashbury, as before stated. The venerable founder of Methodism was so indignant at the conduct of Dr. Coke, in having thus sanctioned republicanism, that he declared he would have done with him, and he should not preach again in any of his pulpits in England. When Dr. Coke landed, and was informed that Mr. Wesley had seen the address, and what were his determinations respecting himself, he was for the moment greatly cast down; but knowing, as he did, Mr. Wesley's aptness to forgive, on repentance and submission, he resolved, after some hesitation, to go directly to him, which he did, and succeeded in effecting a reconciliation. One would have thought that the preceding adventure, whatever other effect it might produce on Dr. Coke, would at all events have prevented him from casting the odium of republicanism upon others; but he seems to have learned no such lesson by his own conduct. Mr. Bradburn had gone a long way into politics, and in a sermon on Equality which he published, he laid down principles on both civil and religious liberty, which Mr. Kilham never had exceeded. So that, if advocating a just and equitable mode of government were republicanism, Mr. Bradburn was fully as guilty as any of those who were thus implicated. It therefore ill became Dr. Coke and Mr. Bradburn, especially the former, to stand foremost in charging the New Connexion with republicanism. Politics had no concern with the separation among the Methodists, and the subject ought not to have been mixed up with that occurrence; but it has ever been the policy of parties in power to brand those who have advocated changes in existing systems with being disaffected to government. The charge was first preferred against the Saviour and his Apostles; and it has been repeated ever since, when convenient, against all reformers in church or state, by those who have an interest in maintaining things on their established footing, and who have found it less difficult to bring their opponents into disrepute, than to answer their arguments.

Mr. Kilham sent an immediate answer to Mr. Thom, contradicting the statement; and having ascertained that a similar account had been given by one who had, up to the time of the division, been strenuous in his advocacy of Methodistical reforms, and very severe in his censure of the preachers, he sent him an admonitory epistle, from which an extract or two may be made, for the purpose of contrasting the spirit of Mr. Kilham with that of some of his accusers. After referring to what this individual had done and said when he was friendly to reform, Mr. Kilham observed,—

“ You told me, near three months ago, that you and Mr. Wood were determined to prevent the people, as much as possible, from giving way to bitterness and uncharitable reflections. But I would ask, have you never set the example in the pulpit, since that time, in the discourses you have delivered? Have you not directly and indirectly endeavoured to represent us as deceived and likely to be ruined? And have you not taken circumstances, not founded on facts, and represented them to the Society as authentic? Which way, my friend, went the Spirit of the Lord with you, when you pursued this plan? Never forget that God’s cause is supported by truth, and that measures contrary to truth will not stand in the day when he calls the nations to his bar. I have been exceedingly grieved at the proceedings you have lately taken among our people. No person would rejoice more than myself at your calling upon, and praying with, our friends, were you to do it in simplicity and godly sincerity; but when you do it to persuade them that they are dead and lifeless, and the cause is owing to their having left Norfolk Street Chapel, with covert insinuations, that we shall dwindle to nothing,—what can we think of your conduct? If you and others really wish to do us good, let your steps be according to God, and then he will help and bless. Were you to compare your conduct with the measures which the catholic priests took at the reformation, perhaps you would discover something similar in many respects. I cannot tell which of you have written to Hull, to inform Mr. Benson and his friends that a great number of our people are gone back to you. When the letter was read a few days ago, thanks were publicly given to God in the Leaders

Meeting. Now, I appeal to your conscience, is it true or false that many have left us and returned to you? Can you bring forward ten persons who have done it since we divided?—Can you bring five? Come and examine our class papers, and see whether we have lost a vast number or not. Have we not joined more who have left you the last month, than you have joined of our friends, and can you suppose that sending false accounts to Hull or other places will answer any good end? Had you not better take the advice given in the 5th Acts, v. 38th and 39th, “I say unto you, refrain from these men and let them alone: for if this counsel or work be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God ye cannot overturn it: lest haply ye should even fight against God.” I shall conclude this letter with a few remarks. 1st. The steps you have taken in Sheffield and in the circuit, have been the cause of many joining us. You first endeavoured to open their eyes, and called upon them to plead for their privileges. 2nd. Though you renounced your avowed principles, and became a warm supporter of the measures you formerly opposed, yet you never gave any satisfactory reasons for the change in your conduct,—and the people determined to follow the convictions of their own mind, rather than your example. 3rd. What you say of God being with you, and his not being with us, may affect weak minds, and work upon the passions of particular individuals, but others will examine whether God be with us or not, and act accordingly. 4th. We wish to promote the interests of religion as far as our influence will go; and we sincerely pray for God to quicken his work among us, and also among you. 5th. I would appeal again to your own conscience whether you are happy or not; does not your past changeable conduct occasion sorrow? Do you not feel that the loss of the confidence of many gives you some uneasiness? Is not the way which leads to happiness an uniform following the word and spirit of God, according to the convictions of our own mind, leaving consequences to the Almighty? Have you done this, or have you acted contrary to it? 6th. If you can convince us that we are wrong, by conversation or writing, we will gladly attend to your arguments, and promise to follow the truth, as far as it appears to us. Examine the “Out-lines of the Constitution” we have just published—examine our conduct—and if our principles or



life be wrong, point it out to us in the name of the Lord Jesus.

"I am,

"Your affectionate servant,

"A. KILHAM."

This was not the first time that Mr. Kilham had felt obliged to write to the party addressed in the preceding note, in consequence of rumours to his disadvantage which he had set afloat. By the following quotation it will be seen that he had been held forth (by the same individual) as insane, just after his trial and expulsion had taken place in London, for the purpose, no doubt, of preventing the public from paying proper regard to his statements respecting the conduct of the Conference. The following is Mr. Kilham's allusion to this circumstance in a letter:—

"You have not forgotten that, on your return from the London Conference, you represented me as being deranged, in the Leaders' Meeting; and, if I mistake not, either you or your friends insinuated that this was a family complaint. Had such been the case, my insanity could not have been a crime. Now, my dear friend, was it kind in you to reflect on me in this way, when you had no ground for your reflections? Any person might as justly say that our family has always been subject to the plague as insanity. They told the Son of God that he was mad and had a devil. You may suppose, my friend, that your changing sides is of God, and that your pulling down what you built up before the Conference, is an acceptable service; but let me intreat you to be cautious how you act, lest you destroy what God has wrought."

While Mr. Kilham was represented by those opposed to him, as actuated by the worst motives, in the measures which he adopted both before and after the division, individuals most intimately acquainted with him were assured, from what they had both seen and heard, that his conduct throughout was dictated only by a supreme regard for the truth. And at the very moment when he was spoken of in the bitterest terms, and said to be employed in poisoning the minds of all under his influence, by instilling into them principles which would be ruinous to religious experience and the christian cha-

racter, he was, in fact, enjoining upon himself and others the necessity of striving to be made more and more holy. Let the reader consider the following passages from his letters to his friends, and compare the disposition therein pourtrayed, with the charges so frequently made against him, that he was injuring the work of God :—

*“ December 31st, 1797.*

“ If I know my own heart, I am seeking the truth on every subject, and would sacrifice every thing in my power to obtain it. So far from being obstinate in my own opinion, I would freely yield to argument, and give praise to God for being delivered from error.

“ Since I entered the field to fight the battles of the Lord, I should have thought it going into paradise to have retired ; yet afterward the Lord has convinced me that my way was directed of him. Scripture and reason are sure guides—frames and feelings often deceive.

“ Many times, while others sleep, my rest is banished by earnest desires and fervent prayers for the church of God. I often wish I could live without sleep, that I might accomplish the work more fully which the Lord has given me to do.

“ My soul longs to get through every thing to the principal object of our calling, that the people may be blessed with life and peace through believing. May the Lord mercifully put an end to strife and division, that we may be able to serve him in peace all the days of our life, and be happy through the ages of eternity.

“ Bear me in fervent prayer before the throne of God, and plead with the Father of our mercies that he may bless us. I long for the salvation of God to appear out of Zion, that the people may rejoice abundantly in his love, and be happy. O could we only live to him fully, and in heart and soul be devoted to his will, we should surely find ‘glory begun below ;’ indeed, a degree of heaven is experienced in our breasts. Let us consider the little difficulties we have to encounter as unworthy to be noticed, when compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. We have the highest encouragement in the Scripture. The Lord is our refuge and help : his promises bind him to pity and save us. May we follow the Lord Jesus fully, that our hearts may continually rejoice in him.”

Mr. Kilham was one of the earliest friends to Sunday Schools, the value of which he fully appreciated when many, who subsequently became their supporters, were yet in doubt as to their utility; and we find him, a few months after the separation, encouraging the society at Sheffield to establish one of these institutions, for which he drew up and furnished a judicious set of rules.

In the month of January, 1798, he was supplying the pulpit for a few weeks at Nottingham; partly for the purpose of his presence counteracting attempts which had been made, by means of a number of misrepresentations (proceeding from individuals who had formerly professed to favour reform,) respecting himself and the Connexion, to grieve the minds and discourage the friends in that circuit. Before returning to Sheffield, Mr. Kilham visited Leicester, where he had an interview with Mr. Brackenbury, who happened to be passing through that town. Mr. Brackenbury was one of those who had disapproved of many parts of the Conference proceedings, especially in withholding the Sacrament from the Societies; but he was opposed to the division which had taken place. Nevertheless, Mr. Kilham and he spent an hour together on terms of Christian charity; and, when parting, engaged to pray for each other's welfare and salvation. Mr. Kilham's death occurring within a year from this period, they never saw each other afterwards.

"Early in March," says Mr. Kilham, "I spent a few days with my good friends at Leeds and the neighbourhood; and visited the societies at Otley, Bramley, Holbeck, and Hunslet, and found the work of the Lord increasing, and many were disposed to unite with us. The friends at Bradshaw accepted our preachers. On the fast-day I preached at Leeds, Birstal, and Huddersfield, and returned the next day to Sheffield, with a heart filled with gratitude to God for all his mercies."

About this time Mr. Kilham was intending to visit Ireland, in consequence of applications made by a number of persons at Cork and other places, who had been expelled by the Old Conference for petitioning for reform in the body, and who wished to have a preacher

belonging to the New Connexion. Two or three times were fixed for him to cross the Channel, to ascertain their circumstances, and make such arrangements as might be necessary; but his friends in England dissuaded him from his purpose, on the ground that his services were absolutely required at home; and by representing to him that, in the politically disturbed state in which Ireland then was, it would be imprudent, because dangerous, for him to go where he was personally a stranger, and only known in name, by his enemies having stigmatized him as disaffected to government; and that, as many parts of that kingdom were declared under military law, he might be seized, and even murdered, without having any means of defending either his person or principles. He had no such apprehensions himself, but his friends had; and since he could not remove their fears, he consented to remain in England, where his character was known, and the law afforded protection. After some delay, in consequence of not being able to provide a preacher for Ireland, one was sent, and from that time the New Connexion has had an interest in that country.

Mr. Kilham had now been a widower about fourteen months, and having entered anew the field of labour as a minister, with a people who had united in Christian communion on terms of which he approved, as being according to Scripture, he began to feel that he was, in all probability, fixed for life; and as a consequence, the desire of having a home of his own once more naturally returned upon him. It may also be presumed that this idea was cherished by the circumstance of having become acquainted with an intelligent and accomplished lady in Sheffield, whose decided piety and amiable disposition, gave the fairest promise of happiness to himself, as well as of increasing his usefulness in the church.

In April, Mr. Kilham therefore entered a second time into the marriage state. The event is recorded by himself in the following terms:—

“Having some months since contracted an acquaintance with Miss Spurr, I had frequently taken the opportu-

nity of spending a little time in her company, when I was at Sheffield, and had corresponded with her while I was absent in the other circuits. The consequence of this acquaintance was, that we agreed to be united in matrimony, if we should be spared till the next summer. All things that relate to ourselves we think of great importance, and we frequently suppose we see the hand of Providence directing our steps, and opening our way in those transactions in life, with which our happiness is immediately connected; and I am much inclined to draw the same conclusions in the present case. We were married on the 12th of April, 1798. We have both cause to believe, that in this we were acting according to the order of Providence. I thank God for having provided me a second partner according to my own heart, and one fully capable of giving me every assistance in my present undertakings. I saw myself utterly unworthy of such a mercy, and was determined to devote myself and her to God, that we might live to his glory in all things. When we were fixed, I found my mind deeply affected at the recollection of my former situation; I had once more the pleasure of having a family, and habitation of my own; my wife and child were anxious to do every thing that could render my life comfortable. We lived happily together, and all our delight was in seeking the things that relate to our eternal interests."

In regard to the general state of the Connexion at this time, Mr. Kilham writes:—

"Many circumstances in our affairs now gave us a most pleasing prospect, and caused us to rejoice in the Lord's goodness to us. Several places opened to receive us, and the people prospered that had come forward to unite with our societies; we saw a prospect of the work spreading considerably. When our Conference drew near, I was happy to find our people willing to open their houses to entertain the preachers and delegates, who were expected at Sheffield on that occasion; we had a sufficient number of places for the reception of all that could come, and besides shewing a willingness to exert themselves to the utmost in making preparations

to accommodate us hospitably, the prayers of the friends were offered up with fervour for God to bless the coming-up of his servants amongst us."

It has already been stated, that "Outlines of a Constitution," had been published by Messrs. Thom and Kilham, with a view to obtain for the principles embodied therein, the sanction of the societies generally, before particular rules were adopted by the Conference; and the proposed regulations were subject to any modifications which might be deemed advisable, when the annual meeting should be held at Sheffield. For some months, this code of laws for the Methodist New Connexion had been under the consideration of the friends in numerous places; and during their discussions on the subject, it became distinctly apparent, for the first time, that while the parties who had left the Old Conference were unanimous in their disapproval of that system, they were not at all agreed in their judgment as to what should be the character of the New Connexion,—save that it should admit the laity to unite with the preachers in the entire management of its affairs. In this, they were unanimous, but hardly in any thing else; and there was great danger of the diversities of opinion which existed, proving elements of discord, if not of disunion. The letters sent to Mr. Kilham from different quarters, while these matters were in agitation, were calculated to fill him with the greatest anxiety as to what would be the consequences. It would not be keeping within the province of the biographer, to go largely into the particulars of what occurred in various parts of the Connexion, while the "Outlines" were under consideration, and the societies preparing to give their sentiments to the Conference; but the enumeration of the principal things which were desired by some parties, may not be so foreign to the object of the present volume. We shall, therefore, specify some of these. First, it appears by a letter to Mr. Kilham from Mr. Thom, who had visited Bolton and other parts adjacent, that the point on which they insisted had reference to the office of local when compared with itinerant preachers, and that the former wished it to be made

the rule, for both to be equal; and for their appointments in the circuit to be in rotation, without fixing the latter in the more important places, or larger chapels, either in the town or country. The disputes on this subject ran so high between the parties, and such unkind feelings were consequently produced among the brethren, that Mr. Thom had been sent for as a peacemaker. Second, it was proposed in other places, for the Conference to be composed, two-thirds of laymen and one-third preachers: the reasons assigned for making the number of the former double that of the latter, were, that the preachers might be "properly checked," and not have too much influence; and also, because "if the power, or any power, which the preachers may think belongs to them be touched, they will of course combine as one man, and be sure to have some dupes amongst the delegates." Third, it was maintained that a power independent of Conference should belong to societies and circuits, to make particular laws for themselves, with which the rest of the Connexion should have no authority to interfere. Fourth, it was pleaded for every *society* to have the right to send its own representative to Conference, as its interests might not be taken proper care of, if circuits only had delegates. 5th. The phrase "Preachers and People" was proposed to be abolished; and the word "Brethren" substituted, in order to absorb the right of power which seemed to be implied in the terms—Preacher, Steward, Leader, &c., and make all the members equal. And sixth.—Besides the parties properly authorised to sit in Conference, it was insisted on that any person belonging to the Connexion who chose to attend, should have the right to be present at its meetings, though not to vote or speak.

The foregoing particulars will give some idea of the spirit of distrust which prevailed in the body, and of the danger which existed, of extreme jealousy, instead of a sound judgment, dictating the laws which should be made at the first Conference, for the government of the Methodist New Connexion. It happened, too, as it almost always does in such circumstances, that the

parties whose plans were the least eligible, were the most strenuous and dogmatical in supporting them. One of these, in a letter to Mr. Kilham, dated May 12, after stating that he was coming to Conference, and describing the propositions he should make, adds, in conclusion, with something like oracular self-confidence, "I consider the laying the basis of a constitution of such vast importance, that I told them, that if it was laid improperly, according to my opinion and the opinion that prevailed at that meeting, I would immediately leave the Conference, as I would not assist in erecting a building upon an improper foundation."

A state of excitement is necessarily unfavourable to legislation, the functions of which should be performed when the mind is in the undisturbed possession of all its faculties; which perhaps was hardly the case, in regard to particular individuals and societies, when the opinions previously given were formed, as to the constitution of the new Itinerancy. The recollection of abuses in the old system was too vivid, and the time since the parties had their feelings lacerated, during the struggle they had been engaged in for liberty, was too recent, to have allowed them to settle down into that calmness which is essential for sober deliberation and wise decisions. They could only think of the wrongs which they had endured, and their attention appears to have been so fully bent on finding out the most effectual methods of restraining the preachers from exercising undue authority over the people, that they overlooked other evils which would be certain to follow, if a system were established under which the ministerial office should be divested of respectability. But there were also others who were not thus inadvertently led into extremes. Not a few, we fear, were actuated by self-love and envy; and because their vanity was not likely to be gratified in their own elevation, they were anxious for rules to be made of such a levelling character, that none might acquire influence or honour beyond the rest. There were many, however, who took a more just and enlarged view of things, and who recommended in the various circuits in which



they lived, a medium plan, which should respect the privileges of all parties in the Connexion; and if these discreet friends could not in every instance carry their wishes into effect, yet they so far prevailed as to modify many objectionable particulars which had been at first contended for by the more violent members.\*

Mr. Kilham being chiefly referred to on all sides, before the Conference took place, he found great difficulty in so composing the minds of those who were bent on extremes, as to make them willing to forego most of the propositions, which he knew from his own experience, if attempted to be carried into practice,

\* The prosperity of the Methodist New Connexion was much injured in the beginning by two circumstances. First,—a great number of respectable and influential individuals, who had endeavoured to introduce the system which was adopted at the division, into the Wesleyan Connexion, and who still approved of its leading principles, declined to separate themselves from the old body. Their reasons for this conduct, so far as an opinion can be formed on the subject, may be enumerated as follows:—1. Fearing the loss of property, in connection with chapel trusts;—2. Looking on a division as unsettling the minds of members, and by that means endangering the salvation of souls;—3. In consequence of friends, and members of their families, being opposed to the division, and a reluctance to separate from old acquaintances;—4. A hope of existing evils being corrected in the course of time;—5. Being partially satisfied with the Articles of Pacification;—6. The persuasions of the preachers, and others who had influence with them. The New Connexion was consequently deprived of the important services which these parties would have rendered in its establishment, had they acted according to the sentiments which they professed to hold. But, second;—when the division took place, many persons of a turbulent character joined the New Connexion, without having imbibed its principles, and merely because they had taken offence, or were personally dissatisfied with some particular occurrences in the old body; and no doubt also under the impression that they should obtain their own way, and become of great consequence in the new community. Whatever may have been the occasion, it is undeniable that a considerable number of this description were found in the New Connexion, when first established. The self-will which they manifested, and the violence of their conduct in many respects, towards the preachers and others, caused great trouble; and the minds of some worthy members were so much grieved, that they retired from the Connexion. The success of the body was thus retarded, as well as its peace greatly disturbed, by these individuals; and it was not until some of them had departed from it, when they found it impossible to gain their own ends, and others had so far improved in their tempers as to have become manageable, that the cause began to prosper, and the value of its principles was made fully to appear.

would be highly injurious to the infant cause in which they were engaged ; as well as contrary to the judgment of the better-informed and more moderate party. He, however, succeeded in some degree ; and a number of things were so much softened, that on the Conference meeting, the differences were so far diminished that there was a fair prospect of unanimity.

As regarded the state of religion among the New Connexion, and the conduct of the friends towards him, Mr. Kilham had great satisfaction in Sheffield. It was impossible to have been more honoured than he was, or to have had more decided tokens of christian affection than he received from them ; yet it was a time of severe trials from other quarters. One circumstance, especially, gave him much trouble, which perhaps ought not to be passed over without some allusion being made to it, though it is unnecessary to introduce names, or to give details, all the parties being dead, and nothing important remaining connected with it ; except it be to clear the character of Mr. Kilham, which was attacked in this instance with more than ordinary virulence.

A preacher with whom Mr. Kilham had once travelled in the North of England, had been guilty of some improper conduct. Of this Mr. Kilham knew nothing until several years afterwards, when the party professed to have repented and obtained pardon from God. This was only a short time before the separation took place, and the individual was then advocating those reforms which Mr. Kilham was striving to bring about in Methodism. Being popular in the pulpit, there was a desire on the part of many that he should join the New Connexion. Mr. Kilham had objections, on account of the misconduct alluded to ; but since he could not formally oppose him, without assigning his reasons for such a step, and as this would have led to an exposure which, supposing he had sincerely repented and was restored, (as he solemnly assured Mr. Kilham was the case,) might almost be doing him a wrong, he considered he ought not to make it, on the grounds of christian charity towards one overtaken in a fault, as laid down in Scripture : he therefore concurred in the general willingness

to receive him as a preacher at the division. It so happened, however, that the individual, of his own accord, declined to join the New Connexion; a number of circumstances also occurred, which to Mr. Kilham's mind clearly proved that he had all along been acting a double part; and also that the instance of misconduct with which Mr. Kilham was acquainted, was not the only one of the same nature of which the party had been guilty. Several things, indeed, subsequently transpired, which seemed to show that what Mr. Kilham had considered a solitary instance of dereliction from duty, was not so by any means. While a change in his views was thus effected, Mr. Kilham himself, and those who had separated, were continually being represented as the refuse and dregs of Methodism; and the Conference was spoken of as now pure, since it had been relieved of those who troubled and disgraced it; with many other reproaches of a similar character. This conduct was more especially pursued in Sheffield towards the New Connexion; and for the purpose of putting an end to such attacks, Mr. Kilham was led to make a communication to two official individuals of the old body, who had been most active in casting aspersions on the new, of what he knew of the improprieties of the preacher in question, who still continued to travel amongst them—to show them that they had better refrain from the course which they had proceeded upon, as an exposure might easily be made to their own discredit. The effect of this was not, however, as he had expected, to silence these parties, but to occasion them to assail Mr. Kilham in another form, by publishing in the societies, that he was attempting to take away the character of a preacher, because he had not joined the New Connexion. Corresponding representations were also made in every place where the New Connexion had an interest, greatly to the prejudice of Mr. Kilham, who had not then told even his most intimate friends what had been the conduct of the preacher; but he now felt himself under the obligation of drawing up a full statement of the whole case, both for his own vindication, and the satisfaction of his brethren, who

with good reason applied to him for an explanation. It was at first intended to be printed; but on further consideration, and by the advice of several whom he consulted, as well as from a merciful regard to the feelings of several innocent and worthy individuals belonging to the family of the guilty party, the design was given up,—since the end (a justification of Mr. Kilham's conduct) had been answered, without having recourse to publication. We have before us this document, as written out by Mr. Kilham, with the letters of the parties in their own hand-writing, as vouchers for the correctness of his statements; but we do not deem it necessary to say more than we have done, as a particular examination of the matter is not required, nor would it, indeed, be interesting after the lapse of forty years. It is enough to be able to observe, on the authority of many of their letters sent to him, after being made acquainted with the circumstances, that Mr. Kilham's friends were perfectly satisfied with the uprightness of his motives and conduct. The same conviction is made on our minds, at this distant period, on reading the account just mentioned;—it was evidently written in the full consciousness of his own integrity.

The Conference was now at hand, and Mr. Kilham was about to terminate his labours in the Sheffield circuit—other places being too anxious to have him appointed to them, to allow him to remain in his first station longer than one year. He was, indeed, applied for at the Conference by almost every circuit in the Connexion, and each had some strong representation to make why he should be sent to it. In truth, they all had great difficulties to encounter, or important exertions to make, in the infancy of the cause; and they reasonably supposed that his influence would essentially benefit them under existing circumstances. Mr. Kilham, however, made no promises to any place, but, with a willingness to go any where, he left himself to the Conference, to be disposed of by his brethren. While in Sheffield, not to mention his exertions for the Connexion generally, his labours in the circuit had been incessant. He preached (sometimes in the open

air\*) three or four times on the Sabbath-day, and nearly on every evening of the week besides ; and these public duties were perhaps the smallest part of what he performed,—the time he employed in pastoral visits, in administering to the sick, and in numberless other matters which required his attention, being such as hardly left him what was necessary for bodily refreshment and sleep. And he seems to have had no power of restraining himself, but with an utter disregard as to what might be the consequence on his health or constitution, he went forward to discharge every duty which was devolved upon him.

The frequent mention which has had to be made of individuals, who from being the friends and coadjutors of Mr. Kilham, became his enemies and traducers after the separation, may perhaps have led the reader to conclude that all by whom he continued to be esteemed had associated themselves with him at the division ; and that, consequently, those who remained with the old body, ceased to entertain the good opinion which they had once formed of him. This, however, was not the fact ; a considerable number, though they did not decide to become members of the New Connexion, still retained their personal regard for Mr. Kilham, and desired his correspondence. Mr. Longridge, of Sunderland, and Mr. Smith, of Newcastle, were of this class, and friendly letters were exchanged between them and him occasionally ; and Mr. Kilham, with the concurrence of some of the friends in the Connexion, even invited these individuals, with a few others not united with it, to attend the first Conference at Sheffield. The reply of Mr. Smith will shew what an amicable feeling subsisted between them. He says :—

“ You kindly invite me to your Conference ; this is a privilege I cannot avail myself of ; the journey is long, and my ties at home very many. I find my labour increases as

\* It was on one of those occasions that the writer of these Memoirs, then a child of six or seven years old, was taken by the hand to hear Mr. Kilham preach at the corner of a street in Sheffield Park ; and though it was the only time he ever saw him, he retains to this day a somewhat distinct recollection both of his personal appearance and the manner of his preaching.

my strength declines, yet I am willing to employ my remaining powers in recommending that religion which is so excellent in its nature, and so beneficial to mankind. In proclaiming these glad tidings of salvation, I consider myself free from the prejudice of any party,—a lover of all men, a debtor to all; and cheerfully go where the Divine Providence points out my way. I still visit those societies in the north called yours, and for these two years past more frequently than ever. I am expected at Saughouse on Sunday first, to administer the Lord's supper. I trust we shall have the Lord's presence with us. I remember the last time I was there, on a like occasion, in December last, I was mightily strengthened and comforted; a taste of heaven was vouchsafed us on earth. These societies, I believe, retain their spiritual life, and are satisfied with their present preachers and the privileges they enjoy; yet it is easy to observe the division occasions considerable difficulties on both sides; whether the two will ever become one again, time must determine. Have you any thoughts of visiting the North this summer? If you come, I shall be glad to see you as usual."

We feel assured that Mr. Kilham would gladly have lived on the same terms as he maintained with Mr. Smith, with others still in connexion with the Wesleyan Conference; but this was unfortunately prevented by the spirit manifested towards him by the generality, which was so different from that of kindness, that he found himself treated as if he were an enemy to the gospel, and was even charged with being a destroyer of souls.

On the meeting of Conference, Mr. Thom was chosen president, and Mr. Kilham secretary. Fifteen preachers attended, and seventeen lay delegates, making thirty-two members, who were sent from ten circuits,—that being the number which had then declared for the New Connexion. The members in society were 5037. An account of the proceedings and decisions of the Conference was published immediately after the conclusion of its sittings, and will shew the general sense of the majority of the members. The following memoranda, which have been found among Mr. Kilham's papers, will, however, give a more distinct view of his own sentiments, than can be obtained from the printed Minutes.

They were written before the meeting of Conference, and intended to lead to the particular business which would have to be transacted. By comparing the heads with those inserted in the Minutes of 1798, it will be ascertained how far the decisions of Conference were according to the suggestions of Mr. Kilham, and in what respects his opinions became modified by the majority.

*Memoranda respecting the Conference.*

Question. Who are to compose the Conference?—Delegates and preachers, either in equal numbers, or otherwise, as may be agreed on.

Q. Is a testimony of the characters of preachers and delegates to be received from the circuits, or to be taken at Conference?—The former seems most reasonable, and that both preachers and delegates should receive it from the last quarterly meeting.

Q. Shall the preachers be president and secretary always, or shall it go by ballot?—It must go by ballot, in regard to both.

Q. What are the duties of the president and secretary? The president is to keep order, attend closely to the arguments advanced on both sides of the question, to stop debates when the general opinion is that they have gone far enough, to sum up the arguments, to take the sense of the meeting when called for, &c. The secretary is to keep minutes of what passes, which are to be read after every motion is put and carried; to write letters, &c.

Q. Shall the powers of the president and secretary cease immediately after the Conference is ended; and shall they have no opportunity of being elected again for two or three years?—This will probably be the best, especially as it refers to their powers ceasing after their work is done.

Q. What preachers are now in full connexion among us?—Answer, ———.

Q. How long have those been on trial who are now employed?—To be considered.

Q. How long shall persons be on trial?—We judge four years, at least, and in dubious cases longer.

Q. Shall any restrictions be laid upon the preachers on trial, respecting marriage?—For them to act very prudently, and not to disgrace their character and the Connexion by their conduct.

Q. Shall the preachers on trial be equal in every respect with those in full Connexion, both in their circuits and at the Conference?—We think not; but it must be considered, and a proper plan attended to.

Q. Are superintendents necessary for the circuits?—We judge they are, with limited power—always to be accountable to the Quarterly Meetings and the Conference.

Q. Shall the superintendents be appointed at the Quarterly Meetings or at the Conference?—We think the latter, only the Quarterly Meetings shall have power to examine, try, and suspend from that office, and appoint another till the Conference, when any preacher acts contrary to the nature and design of his office.

Q. How many circuits are there, and what number of preachers will be wanted?—Answer, ———.

Q. Who can come out to help us the next year?—Answer.

Q. How shall the preachers be stationed?—As well as we can.

Q. What can be done to make the circuits as equal as possible, that there may be no clamouring for good circuits?—Let the allowance of all the circuits be as much alike as possible—that is, let a preacher be as well provided for in poor circuits as in those that are rich.

Memorandum. A committee to be appointed in some place near each other, for purposes to be named, between the Conferences.

Memorandum. People attending Conference.

The foregoing suggestions, coming as they did from Mr. Kilham, received that attention to which they were entitled, and most of his propositions were adopted by the Conference. They were, indeed, founded on the principle of justice towards all parties, and became thereby recommended to the sober-minded and moderate members both in and out of that meeting.

While the following passage in the public Minutes is strongly confirmatory of the statement which has previously been made, (see note, page 360,) respecting one class of persons who had united with the New Connexion, it also shews that the Conference, much to its credit, was resolved, from the very first, not to be overawed by the menaces of certain parties, who, failing to carry their measures by reason and argument,



had recourse to threatenings—by which is presumed to be meant, intimations of leaving the New Connexion to re-join the Old. This actually took place in many instances, especially at an early period after the division, which created much discouragement to the friends, particularly as such occurrences were often held forth as triumphs by the other party. We refer to the annexed question and answer :—

Q. Shall the Conference be deterred from following the convictions of their own minds, by any verbal or written threatenings, either from individuals, or any number of persons ?

A. Should this be admitted, our liberty is at an end. Any thing that wears the aspect of compulsion ought to be rejected.

Mr. Kilham was stationed at Nottingham for the ensuing year. The appointment was not only suitable from the importance of the place, but his services were required there more especially, on account of difficulties which were connected with the chapel—as a dispute was going forward between the Old and New Connexion respecting its occupation by the preachers,\*

\* The dispute may be briefly explained as follows :—At the division, the legal bearings of some provisions in the Trust Deeds, referring to the power of Conference to appoint preachers, were misunderstood, as was also the one with regard to the extent of the authority of chapel trustees. The opinions which generally prevailed were these,—that the Conference not being a body corporate, was in law rendered unable to hold real property ; and its right to occupy the pulpits of the Methodist chapels, was looked upon as dependent on the concurrence of the trustees, in whom the premises were legally vested ; and since chapels were understood as having been erected for the use of the societies and congregations worshipping therein, for whom the trustees acted, it was supposed that they could secure the occupancy to such societies and congregations under all circumstances. When the division took place, a large majority of the trustees and societies at Nottingham, Huddersfield, Brighouse, and perhaps a few other places, declared for the New Connexion ; in these cases, the fullest confidence was felt by the trustees, (and their legal advisers were also of that opinion,) of their having the right to admit the preachers belonging to the new body into the pulpit, which they accordingly did. The Wesleyan Conference objected to this transfer, and on good legal grounds, as it afterwards proved ; and required the pulpits

which rendered his advice and presence almost indispensable.

The most laborious duties of the Conference fell on Mr. Kilham, as secretary; and he was so much fatigued with the writing he had to get through, and the want of rest, that Mrs. Kilham became alarmed at his apparent exhaustion; and she had fears lest he might sink under the burthen which was upon him, and which, for the first time, seemed to be too great for his strength. But her mind was soon relieved by the improvement which she saw in his health and spirits shortly after, when he seemed again to possess all his wonted zeal and vigour.

He was exceedingly gratified with the proceedings of Conference; there was a disposition on the part of the members generally, since they had become a separate body, to go forward peaceably in the enjoyment of the privileges which they had obtained, and to cease from contentions with the community from whom they

to be open to their preachers as before. Hence arose the disputes alluded to, which continued for several years, involving certain law proceedings; and eventually the chapels so situated were given up to the old Conference. There were difficulties and hardships on all sides connected with these cases; but there can be no question, upon an impartial consideration of all the circumstances, that the ultimate decision was the most proper one. For, although it seems strange that societies and trustees should have been deprived of places of worship which they had built for their own accommodation, yet on the other hand, if it were allowed that a place of worship, after it has been regularly settled, and certain interests therein, whether relating to the pulpit or any other matter, vested in different parties by a Trust Deed, may be so changed in its use, as to exclude any one from the privileges originally secured to it—there would be an end of all confidence, and those engaged in erecting chapels would not know to what party or purposes they might in course of time be appropriated. Whether it was wise or prudent for the society and trustees of these chapels, to give the power over the pulpit to a Conference composed entirely of preachers, and in which the people had no voice, is a question into which we need not enter: but the proper time for considering such points is when chapels are built, and before they are settled on trust, and not afterwards. When the terms and provisions of a trust deed have been fixed, it is of the greatest importance, as a matter of principle, (though in particular cases it may, as we have observed, involve hardships,) that no change can possibly be made, except with the consent of every party having an interest therein, and the concurrence of the Lord Chancellor, who is in law the universal guardian of such property throughout the kingdom.

had lately parted, unless forced into further controversy in their own defence.

There is not a sentence nor a word in the Minutes of Conference (which were drawn up by Mr. Kilham) denoting unkindness towards any individual, or any party. The subjoined extract from the address will prove, that while a just value was put upon their own institutions, there was no longer a wish to cast reflections on others, but only a supreme concern that God might be honoured in all their performances :—

When we take a view of the progress of religious liberty in the Connexion with whom we are united, we feel the greatest consolation arising from the sincerity of those principles upon which we have acted. It was not from an affectation of singularity, nor a pertinacious adherence to our own opinions, that determined us to proceed in supporting the rights and liberties of the people. No! It was a conviction, arising from scripture evidence, and the usages of the primitive Church, that all the members of Christ's body are one; and that the various officers of it should act by the general approbation and appointment of the people.

This purity of principle has supported and encouraged us to go on through all the difficulties we have had to encounter, and the reproach with which we have been loaded.

The success of our proceedings, in establishing a scriptural and rational plan of government in our societies; the revival of vital religion in many parts of the New Connexion, by the band meetings and classes, by prayer meetings, preaching the Gospel, &c. give us reason to believe, that the Lord of the harvest, the head of the Church, approves of our plan, by blessing our endeavours. In many places, the societies are much alive to God—backsliders are restored, and sinners are brought to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

From this blessed state of things among the people, and the judicious choice of delegates, arose the love and unity of our Conference. In the examination of the preachers' characters—the stationing of the preachers—the disbursements of the collections—and the public debates which took place on different parts of the Constitution proposed to the societies, personal reflections were avoided, and undue warmth of expression guarded against:—all seemed solicitous to establish a plan that would give general satisfaction to the societies, and fix and perpetuate the liberty of the Gospel among us. And

the most grateful sensations which arose in our minds on the occasion, will, we trust, lead us to praise and adore the Father of Lights, who has pointed out our way, and strengthened us to walk in it.

The above passages exhibit nothing of the mere sectarian ; but are characteristic of the true christian, who values his privileges for the opportunities which they furnish for glorifying God ; and whose chief joy arises from the circumstance of having tokens of the divine presence and approbation, in the revival and extension of the work of salvation.

The "Magazine," which had been published monthly since January, and chiefly under the direction of Mr. Kilham, was also free from every thing calculated to irritate the old body. It was, indeed, entirely devoted to the promotion of personal religion in the strictest sense ; and the fact that every subject on which controversies had been going forward in the Methodist Connexion for several years, was carefully avoided in the first volume of that periodical, proves most satisfactorily that Mr. Kilham had no intention to perpetuate strife, but, on the contrary, was anxious to direct his mind solely to his ministerial duties, with a special reference to the edification and salvation of souls.

The following extract from one of his letters about this time, exhibits a state of mind highly honourable to Mr. Kilham's character as a christian ; and it shews how he endeavoured to reconcile himself to sufferings when brought upon him while performing his duty. We do not find him indulging a vindictive temper, nor contriving how he might annoy those to whom he was opposed, and whose conduct towards him would perhaps have justified retaliation, under the old Mosaic law of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth ;" but this was not the rule by which he acted, especially after the separation, when he could walk according to the system of liberty which he had laboured to establish. He observes, in the letter alluded to :—

"When I felt my mind exercised before the separation, it arose from the unreasonableness of my opponents, and from a deep conviction of their acting con-

trary to their calling. I was grieved to think that men professing godliness, should have so little grace, and that they should seek to injure me, though I was seeking to do them all the good in my power; but I see that sufferings of this nature were what Jesus Christ himself endured, and he has assured me, that if I suffer with him, I shall also reign with him. I am now willing, through his grace, to bear reproach from any quarter, so that his glory may be advanced upon earth.—indeed, I expect to have my name cast out as evil. I look for crosses daily, and seek for a mind to bear them to the glory of God. By this means, hard things become easy, rough ways are smooth, and my soul both sees and feels the salvation of God. The more I am resigned to the will of God, the more comfortable I feel myself in all the conflicts which infinite wisdom appoints. I frequently feel that my soul rejoices under the cross, because while we suffer for following Christ, the spirit of glory and of God rests upon us. I wish to learn to be content in every state, and to thank God for every affliction.

“It is our duty to endure hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. It is necessary that we should be sifted as wheat. Jesus Christ, however, prays for us; and while we have his intercession before God, we shall not be left comfortless:—let us go, therefore, without the camp, bearing his reproach.”

In another letter, sent to one who had complained to Mr. Kilham of ill treatment from a certain individual, for the purpose of dissuading the party from rendering evil for evil, he says,—“Perhaps no person has suffered more persecution, nor had a more harassing life than I have for the last two years [since his trial and expulsion by the Conference in 1796]; and yet I have found, and do find, such happiness in the Lord Jesus, as enables me to go on my way rejoicing. I commit my soul and my all to God, not fearing what men or devils can do against me. If all the world call me a hypocrite and a deceiver, God knows my heart, and reads truth and sincerity engraven upon it. I believe that he will be my defence and salvation for ever.

Mr. — and his friends have done every thing in their power to injure, but God has defended and blessed me; I cast my all into his hands and fear not the frown of any adversary.”

Before Mr. Kilham went to Nottingham, according to the appointment of Conference, he paid a short visit to Leeds; and we find him again writing in the same pious strain, declaring his confidence in God, and the fullest submission to his will. In a letter to Mrs. Kilham, dated June 17, he says,—“God has blessed me since I wrote last. The weather has been exceeding hot, and my riding [on horseback] and labours hard—but still God has blessed and does bless, and to his name shall be ascribed all the praise for ever. Let us only live to him and we shall be happy. Do all the good thou canst,—let us work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh when no man can work. I am happy and content, because the Lord calls me to my present work: only let us serve him, and we shall always both meet and part to his glory.” In another letter, he says,—“My soul longs to get through every thing to the principal object of our calling, that the people may be blessed with life and peace in believing. May the Lord mercifully put an end to strife and division, that we may be able to serve him all the days of our life, and be happy through the ages of eternity.” Mrs. Kilham observes,—“Previous to our leaving Sheffield, he informed me that his soul had been more lively towards God, and more fervently engaged for his glory, than he had ever experienced before.” We may introduce another passage from a letter dated July 6, to shew his anxiety for the conversion of mankind, his opinion of the description of preaching most likely to be useful, and how heavily the responsibility of the minister of the Gospel rested upon his mind:—“I am,” he says, “more than ever assured that the people in every place have need of close, searching discourses. To amuse them with fine things, would only be beating the air; it would be a curse to ourselves and to them. I long to see sinners awakened; the Lord encourages me; I pray and he hears and blesses; I wish that all my works

may be wrought in God. I want faith to believe the word in expectation of success; may he strengthen me to do this for the sake of Jesus Christ our glorious Redeemer."

In this frame of mind, Mr. Kilham removed to the Nottingham circuit, and commenced his labours there. As we approach the period, when, after a very short illness, he was taken away by death, it is most satisfactory to find him manifesting the temper and dispositions which appear so prominent in his letters. Controversies among christians are not of themselves favourable to the growth of grace in the heart,—even as to those who are contending for the truth, and for purer modes of worship,—on account of the danger there is of the attention being withdrawn from those things which more immediately relate to personal holiness and salvation; but Mr. Kilham, throughout all the disputations in which he was engaged, seems to have been able to retain that spirituality of mind which belonged to him previously; and the reforms which he strove to effect in the Methodist system, were to him chiefly desirable because, in his judgment, they would tend to the diffusion of practical and experimental religion, besides proving conservative of the purity of the church. And as soon as the New Connexion was established, he was above all things anxious that its excellency should be made to appear as well in the usefulness of its members, as on account of the constitutional principles upon which it was founded. He was therefore assiduous to a degree which could not have been long endured by the hardiest constitution; and before leaving Sheffield, his strength was evidently overborne by excessive toil; still he had no intention of relaxing in his endeavours to be useful, only—as if he had foreseen that his days were numbered—he wanted to concentrate his energies more than he had been able to do for some time, in fulfilling the immediate duties of his ministerial office; but none of his friends anticipated that, in a few months, he would be snatched away both from the church and the world.

Mr. Kilham, in consenting to be stationed in this circuit, was wishful to show, that if he could by any

means contribute to the adjustment of the differences respecting the chapel, he was at the service of the friends for that purpose; but from a letter to Mr. Hall, written just before Conference, he seems to have had small, if any, hope of effecting that object, after the unsuccessful efforts which had been made at negotiation by the parties. Mr. Kilham says, in reference to something which Mr. Hall had done in the matter,—“I am apprehensive it will be as water spilt on the ground; however, let the thought comfort your heart, that you have spent a good deal of time, and been at considerable expense, in attempting once more to serve the cause.” We shall only add, on this subject, that nothing was accomplished towards a settlement of the chapel during Mr. Kilham’s residence at Nottingham; indeed, he scarcely had the opportunity of entering into the affair, having been much employed in travelling and other things immediately on going there—and then he was removed by death in December.

Shortly after the Conference, the idea of Mr. Kilham visiting Ireland was revived, in consequence of the urgent letters received on the subject from individuals in that kingdom who had embraced the principles of the New Connexion. To prevail with him, they entreated him, “in the Lord’s name, and for their sakes, to come over, if it were for ever so brief a period;” but the purpose was, however, again deferred, in consequence of some other engagements which he was obliged to attend to, and which would take him from his own circuit several weeks. One of these was to open a chapel, which had been built at Hanley, in the Staffordshire Potteries. He also went to Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, York, and Hull. Some of these visits were probably intended to compensate for Mr. Kilham not having been stationed in those circuits, which had requested him at the Conference. On his appointment to Nottingham, it was therefore agreed for him to go and see them as soon as possible afterwards.

Persons in the situation of Mr. Kilham are sometimes more perplexed by the conduct of certain of their over-zealous friends, than by the malice and opposition



of their enemies. He was often put to trouble by the morbid sensibility shown by a number of his supporters as to his reputation and character ; which led them to listen to every rumour, however absurd, which they heard to his disadvantage, and which they conveyed to him,—that he might refute it. This was most unwise, and did harm instead of good to Mr. Kilham in every way, inasmuch as it gratified those whose object was merely to annoy him ; and it also put him into the disagreeable position either of seeming unmindful of his friends, when he did not attend to their recommendations in reference to noticing, in the manner they wished, what was said against him (which was often too vague and ridiculous to deserve contradicting); or of wearying himself continually by attempting to chase down reports which could be multiplied without end,—there being no limits to the inventive faculties and hatred of some of his opponents. The following extract from a letter by a respectable individual in Hull, inclines us to believe that his visit to that place might be partly in consequence of something which had been alleged against him, and which the writer wished to be gravely investigated,—very unnecessarily, as the reader will admit, we have no doubt, when he has heard the statement. A person, during one of those jarring interviews which frequently occurred between Methodists who were ranged on different sides, in the neighbourhood of Hull, at the division, made the monstrous affirmation that he knew something about Mr. Kilham which might cost him his life, if it were divulged. This seemed to be a heavy charge indeed, and it very naturally stimulated his friends who were present, or who heard of it, to urge the party who threw out the insinuation to explain his meaning, which he refused to do ; and, to shuffle the matter from himself, if possible, he at length said, it was nothing of which he had any knowledge, but what a preacher had told him. He was then asked to name the preacher, if he would not specify the offence imputed, but neither would he comply with this request ; which occasioned some of Mr. Kilham's supporters to threaten the individual with legal

proceedings,—and the case was left in this state for some time. Now the proper course for Mr. Kilham's friends would have been, to have treated the party, and the libel too, with the contempt which they deserved ; but instead of doing so, they manifested the deepest mortification, (which unquestionably was the precise effect intended to be produced by the slander,) and wrote to Mr. Kilham, desiring him to prosecute the party, as one of his friends had (of his own accord) pledged him to do, if the author were not revealed within a given time. He sent an expostulatory letter, and wished it to be read to his accuser, rather out of deference to the feelings of his friends, than from a conviction of that or any other step being necessary to be taken in so ridiculous a business; and because he thought this would put an end to the affair. His friends in Hull, however, were not for passing it over in any such way, and one of them addressed him on the subject as follows:—

“If the business be suffered thus to subside, the public will have a just right to believe every false report or scandal which the Methodist preachers or their adherents may think proper to invent; for if a man's character be thus stabbed in the dark, and no notice be taken of it, certainly it will be supposed that every assertion is fact, and that you dare not offer to controvert it.

“We have no doubt but if any preacher could have criminated you in any respect whatever, he would have esteemed it as doing God service—so much are they incensed against you. But more will believe them than will believe you, until their scandalous practices be made yet more apparent. Men must have line upon line, precept upon precept, fact upon fact, to make them dislike and forsake errors which they have been accustomed to, and embrace truths which are discordant to their feelings and interests. I am no lawyer, but I know of no other method with \* \* \* but law; he is callous to every thing else; but after all, you must act as you think proper;—you must, however, excuse the freedom of a friend.”

If Mr. Kilham had been governed by the advice of such of his warm, but not very discreet admirers, as

the writer of the above letter, he would have commenced, at the least, fifty actions at law against different persons who originated or gave currency to false and injurious reports; and which were ten-fold more troublesome to him on account of the annoyance which they gave to his friends, than they would have been had he seen others less concerned about them. We are unable to state how the preceding circumstance ended: probably, the allegation like many others, was soon forgotten; or if the excitement it produced continued for any length of time, Mr. Kilham's death would put an end to all thoughts of taking any measures with the party who brought it forward. We have mentioned it principally with the view of shewing that his officious friends, by their over-anxiety and touchiness, were sometimes the means of giving importance to attempts to injure him, which, if they had been indifferently treated, would have hurt no one but the slanderers themselves.\*

While his enemies were thus employed against him, his thoughts were directed to subjects of a different nature, and he was laying himself out to the utmost in the service of religion; his desires and endeavours to promote a spirit of devotion, as well as practical godliness, seem to have increased daily. The following is from one of his letters:—

“The Lord seems to have set me at the hottest post, to endure reproach and shame for his sake: yet amidst all, the cross of Christ is precious, and I am happy in being accounted worthy to suffer for his sake. Oh! that I may ever do it as a christian. I long to be made perfect through suffering, that God may be glorified in my life and death. When I am fully engaged in preaching and writing, my

\* Mr. Eversfield, in a letter to Mr. Kilham, alluding to the weakness of some of his friends, in being so easily moved by improbable stories invented respecting him, and propagated with an industry corresponding with the effect which they were allowed to produce on the minds of his supporters, humorously says,—“I did not forget to give them a hint respecting their credulity. I told them it was my opinion, that if any person were to come to Sheffield, and report that you had begun to make another moon, some of them would be so weak as to believe it. There is no accounting for it.”

soul rejoices to run its course. I am happy and comfortable in any situation, and am full of inward satisfaction : I am conscious the Lord requires me to take the steps I am now pursuing, and therefore my heart rejoices, and my joy is frequently unspeakable and full of glory."

The last paper which he wrote for the "Magazine," and which probably was the last printed piece of which he was the author, shews how much he valued prayer. It was written in September, when he was on a visit at Birmingham ; his object was to direct and induce christians to "pray with the spirit, and with the understanding also." For this purpose, he recommended proper and intelligible words to be used in prayer,—a reverential awe of God—a knowledge of the wants to be supplied—humility in asking, confidence in being heard, a hope of receiving, and also, perfect resignation to the Divine will. He then urged the performance of this duty in a manner which evinced his own sense of its importance, and the beneficial effect of rightly attending to it.

However strong and robust might have been Mr. Kilham's constitution originally, it now became evident to some of his most intimate friends, and such as, from their knowledge of him, were the best capable of judging, that his health was greatly impaired. He appears, indeed, for some time to have been sensible that his labours had been too great; and under a conviction that he could not sustain the fatigues which he had endured for the last three or four years, he determined to decline travelling so much in future, as he had done recently. Two or three extracts from his letters will shew his own consciousness of inability to exert himself as heretofore:—

"Leicester, September 25. I am just harrassed out of my life by preaching, travelling, and want of rest—my mind is comfortable and happy—pray for me. Rest seems desirable : but—[alluding to the many calls made upon him from different quarters],—I must not have it in this world. God bless you—May we hasten to the coming of the Lord Jesus."

It unfortunately happened, that, while Mr. Kilham

was in this state of debility, he lost the horse on which he usually rode, which compelled him to travel between the more distant places in the circuit, by a coach which ran at inconvenient hours: he had therefore to be out in the night occasionally, and this added to his indisposition. Being much wearied with a journey at the end of October, he wrote from Hull as follows:—

“If I live to get through my journey to Wales, I intend in future to travel as little as possible out of my own circuit; I find it exceedingly harassing, both to body and mind, to be in my present state. So far, however, as Providence seems to require this at my hands, the Lord’s will be done.”

On another occasion, he expresses the same feelings; but, as the reader will perceive, he always qualified his purposes, respecting his own ease and convenience, by a determination to submit to the will of God under all circumstances. He says,—

“I am exceedingly weary in being harassed from place to place; I want rest and tranquillity;—I must endure for the present, but think I must shortly resolve to confine myself to my circuit, and leave it as little as possible.”

The journey to Wales, which Mr. Kilham mentions, was taken in the early part of November, in consequence of pressing invitations from a Mr. L. Lewis of Penydarron, Merthyr Tydvil, who, with a number of others, approved of the principles of the Methodist New Connexion, and wished Mr. Kilham to visit the place, with a view of establishing an interest there. After it had been arranged for him to go to Wales, the debility which Mr. Kilham had begun to be conscious of, rendered the journey a formidable undertaking, both to himself and in the estimation of Mrs Kilham, who felt unusual anxiety on his account. In a letter written to a friend, a short time after his death, she says,—

“My mind was much sunk the day he set out. I had always dreaded that journey more than any one he had taken, perhaps because it was so long, and quite among strangers. On the evening when he left us, I said to Mrs. Sutton, ‘If I were superstitious, I should think my husband was going

to die, and that I should never see him again.' The same apprehension dwelt on my mind the last few days of his absence; but with thankfulness, we met at the appointed time. The Lord, however, for reasons beyond our understanding, called him away in less than three weeks after his arrival."

Having had occasion to forward a letter, which had come to Nottingham just after his departure, she took the opportunity of writing a note, in which she thus expresses her concern for him:—

"I wish this letter may give me an opportunity of hearing from you. If not, I shall be satisfied until I do. Write, my love, as soon as convenient, but never let me in any way prevent you from being better employed. I do not know that ever I found it so hard to part from you as yesterday; but the will of the Lord be done. Oh that this absence, longer than any we have yet experienced, may be sanctified to our good, and the happiness of others! God bless you, my dear; pray for me. I will pray for your prosperity and happiness every night at six o'clock: meet me, if you can. The Lord will bless us;—we have cause of thankfulness on every side."

A few particulars of Mr. Kilham's last journey, which he travelled on horseback, will not be unacceptable. They are collected from his letters. He says,—“I reached Birmingham, November 12, at four o'clock; the roads were very dirty, and the weather cold: I found myself extremely cold on the road, which caused me afterwards to be afflicted with the head-ache. I rose the next morning with a good deal of weakness, but trusted in the Lord for help in my exercises. I set off by six o'clock, and travelled that day as far as Leominster. It rained part of the day, the roads were excessively bad, and I was benighted, having several miles to ride in the dark. I slept at a comfortable inn, and proceeded the next day. I rode twenty-four miles on a very dirty road, without stopping; indeed I had no opportunity of resting where I could be in any degree comfortable. When I reached the first town in Wales, I halted to refresh myself and horse, as both wanted rest, and having travelled twelve miles in the rain, I

was very wet. I had a comfortable little room and fire, and endeavoured to dry myself as soon as possible. My heart was filled with gratitude for past mercies, and I found encouragement to go forward. I left the place in the afternoon, and had a good road to Brecon, though it was hilly part of the way. The rain came on again very heavily, so that I was wet through a second time that day. I met with Mr. Lewis's son at Mr. Watkinson's; here I found the people very friendly, and they showed me every kindness, and did every thing in their power to make me comfortable. After breakfast next morning, Mr. Lewis and I set out from Brecon, and reached Merthyr Tydvil about two o'clock. I had a thankful heart at having arrived in safety, and found a resolution to live in every place to the glory of God. From all appearances, there will be an opening for us in this place, as soon as we shall have it in our power to supply them with a preacher that is suitable. I went on Tuesday, and preached at Cardiff to a good congregation; many of the Methodists were present. The next day, I returned in one of the coldest days I ever travelled, unto Merthyr; it was with difficulty we could proceed on the road, as the horses were not prepared for the frost. On Thursday morning, we found the snow deep, but I was obliged to go forward. For 18 miles there was not a moment of fair weather, and the snow was so deep in some places, that I could scarcely get my horse on; I stopped that night at Brecon, and preached in a chapel belonging to Mr. Whitfield's people; many were present and I found comfort and peace in speaking to them."

Again he writes to Mrs Kilham,—"I sit down with pleasure to write to you; truly the Lord Jehovah is with us, the God of Jacob is our defence; O that we could praise him for his goodness, and adore him for his love for ever. Surely my lines are fallen in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage. After morning preaching, I could not but weep for joy; the Redeemer appeared so precious, and his ways so delightful, that my mind was full of consolation. I was exceedingly busy writing till I went to the preaching;

when I came to the place, I rejoiced to find so many present, and we had a comfortable season. It is impossible to express the joy I felt in seeking the salvation of my fellow-creatures. In the society meeting, I felt a lively hope that God would grant us his protection, that we may adore him for ever. At H—— I met with much unjust reproach, but when I go to God, I always find power to cast my care into his hands: I can appeal to him that I am jealous for his adorable name, and desirous of promoting his praise. Labour is delightful when the heart is truly engaged; perhaps very few have more exercises than I have at present; I can seldom spare more than five hours for sleep, and I am frequently much fatigued; but still I find that wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness."

Had Mr. Kilham been in competent health, the fatigues of this journey would hardly have been felt by him; but in his reduced state, the badness of the roads, the inclemency of the weather, and those inconveniences which necessarily attended a long absence from home, were all against him, though, it will be observed, he uttered not a word of complaint: on the contrary, he was evidently sensible of the goodness of God at all times, even in his sufferings, and he never lost an opportunity of expressing his gratitude for the mercies he enjoyed, and his willingness to submit to the Divine pleasure, whatever it might be. In the last letter which he ever wrote to Mrs. Kilham, he says,—“I am happy in doing and suffering the will of God—he is my refuge and song; may his grace influence and help me to the end.” He returned from Wales at the end of November, evidently weak and much exhausted, but without betraying any symptom to excite alarm; and as he had kept clear from other engagements which might again have taken him from home, for the purpose of resting as much as possible, which seemed to be all that he required, it was hoped a few weeks, or, at the most, a few months, passed tranquilly and with only moderate labour, would have the effect of restoring him to health.



## CHAPTER XI.

DECEMBER, 1793. MR. KILHAM'S LAST SICKNESS AND DEATH.  
CONCLUSION.

WE have now reached the last month of Mr. Kilham's life, and there remain only two or three particulars to be noticed, before we describe the circumstances of his death. It will be recollected, that immediately on Mr. Kilham losing his first wife at Ashton, it was asserted by his adversaries that her days had been shortened by anxiety and distress, which he had occasioned by his writings and conduct while seeking to effect changes in Methodism. No charge could be more unfounded than this was, as Mr. Kilham showed at the time; yet instead of being withdrawn, as it ought to have been, another, almost as cruel, was added to it, on his subsequent marriage, having reference to his second wife. By a letter written in September, it would seem that Mr. Kilham had heard of it at that time in Nottingham; but being on the spot, it is probable he thought the presence of himself and Mrs. Kilham, and the happiness they enjoyed in each other, would be a sufficient refutation of the rumour, without his taking any particular trouble to contradict it. But on his return from Wales, he received a letter from Mr. Styan, a preacher belonging to the New Connexion, then stationed at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, informing him that one of the leading preachers in the old body had been on a visit to that quarter, and that he had repeated both the reports alluded to in different places where he had been, with the intention of setting the minds of the friends against him. Mr. Kilham was much affected on hearing this, and instantly addressed the individual on the subject. His letter is dated Dec. 10, and it was probably the last which Mr. Kilham ever wrote. We shall extract a few sentences, immediately referring to

the occasion of its being sent. Mr. Kilham evidently was in great grief when he took up his pen:—

*Nottingham, Dec. 10, 1798.*

SIR,

I am extremely sorry that I should be compelled to address you at this time; it is a painful task to me, but my conscience urges me to comply with what duty requires. \* \* \* Not content with your attack on my character in \* \* \* case, I am credibly informed that you have been into the North, and, to prejudice our friends against me, you represented me as having already in effect killed my late partner, and gone a great length toward ruining my present wife with my erroneous principles.\* I challenge you or any other person to prove that my late wife ever manifested the least sorrow at the steps which I took in exposing the system which you endeavour to uphold; on the contrary, she expressed the greatest satisfaction in the course which I had taken, and on her death-bed requested me to pursue my way, whatever reproach or shame might be my portion. And every person acquainted with my present wife is able to bear witness that she rather glories in being accounted worthy to suffer with me for the sake of Jesus, than repents of the steps she has

\* Lest it should be suspected that Mr. Kilham held any principles which were not strictly orthodox and evangelical, (though such a thing can hardly be even imagined, after the abundant evidence which has appeared of the soundness of his faith, in the course of this volume,) it may be proper to state, that he had not changed his sentiments on any doctrinal point whatever, which he held as a Methodist preacher while in connexion with Mr. Wesley. The only subject on which he could be thought to have been merely speculative, was, his leaning to the notion of a universal restoration; but even in this respect, while the preachers in general thought differently, there were several who held the same opinion. The writer of these memoirs believes the doctrine without foundation in Scripture; yet, like some other notions respecting the locality of the eternal world—the millennial reign of Christ—the resurrection, and other events, which are now variously interpreted, but which will doubtless be understood in due time,—being hypothetical and unconnected with the great essentials of religion, considerable latitude may, without danger, be allowed in their construction. Judging of Mr. Kilham by what he has published, by the plans and outlines of sermons which he has left behind him, and by the testimony of those who knew him, and recollect his ministry, there scarcely could be a preacher less disposed to be fanciful in his expositions of sacred truth, or who confined himself more exclusively, when in the pulpit, to topics immediately connected with holiness and salvation.

taken. She never had a moment's uneasiness from my opinions on the doctrines of the Gospel. 'The worst thing I wish to befall you, is, that you may always live as happily and as comfortably with your partner and family as we live together;\* then I am sure you will not have many sorrowful moments.

I sincerely entreat you in the name of Jesus to act according to your own preaching. \* \* \* If your cause cannot be supported without slandering characters, and publishing falsehoods, it were better to renounce it than to submit to such pitiful shifts.

Yours, &c.,

A. KILHAM.

\* The above is Mr. Kilham's description of their happiness; it so happens that from a letter written some time after his death, we are enabled to adduce Mrs. Kilham's testimony, also—which completely falsifies the statement made in regard to his having been the occasion of any uneasiness to her. "While my husband lived," she says, "the comfort I felt in my attachment to him was such as made me ready to wonder sometimes why life had been painted in gloomy colours. We had that perfect confidence in, and affection for each other, which constantly united us as the heart of one; and it was the remembrance of what I experienced in this union, that caused me to say when he was dying, 'If a human being could have given happiness, thou hadst given it to me.' But the Lord has seen it good to make me an example of the uncertainty of human happiness; mine was short, in proportion as the enjoyment had been great." She also observes, in the same letter,—“Sometimes I feared I had loved my husband too much, and that the Lord saw his continuance in the world would have endangered the prosperity of our souls, and had therefore called him away. At other times I thought with pain of his having had such a life of labour, and, in some respects, of suffering: the cheerfulness and vigour of his mind were beyond the strength of his body; and I think it cannot be doubted by any who knew him that his uncommon exertions hastened his death.” These sentiments show the value which Mrs. Kilham put upon the affection of her husband, and the sense she had of her loss, when he was taken away by death; and even if there had been at any time a misunderstanding between them, it would have been impertinent in others to have busied themselves with the matter in the way spoken of in the above letter; but there was no such difference,—the allegation therefore was entirely an invention. Every word uttered by Mr. and Mrs. Kilham proves that it was the paltry spite of those who wished to wound him in the tenderest part, which made them say he had, either by his principles or conduct, been the occasion of distress to his wife. On the contrary, the union was a most happy one for both parties, and their regard for each other was such, that it might be characterised by the term fondness, rather than by any other word. About two years after Mr. Kilham's death, Mrs. Kilham became a member of the Society of Friends, and was deservedly held in great estimation for her piety and consistent conduct as a christian, as well as for her more public labours in the cause of education. On becoming a widow, at Nottingham, she continued to reside there for some time, and then

Two days after the preceding letter was written, Mr. Kilham's illness commenced, and proved fatal in little more than a week. The following account of his sickness and death, was given by Mrs. Kilham soon after the event. It was communicated in a letter to Mr. Grundell, and was read at the conclusion of a funeral sermon which he preached for Mr. Kilham. The statement was also transcribed for the use of other preachers in the Connexion, who improved the event in a similar manner. The description of Mr. Kilham's last days from the pen of his wife, is affectingly graphic; and the whole of the circumstances furnish an instructive lesson to those who are interested in knowing "how a christian can die."

"On Wednesday, December 12, 1798, it was thought my husband took a violent cold in walking home from the country between four and five miles after preaching. The reason of his returning that evening was, a small piece of bone had lodged in his throat at dinner, which had given him considerable pain, and he wished, if not speedily relieved, to obtain help from a surgeon. He had not been able to take any solid food during the afternoon, indeed, we were only beginning to dine when he took the bone, and he had afterwards endeavoured in vain to force it down, by eating a crust of bread. The night was very cold, and he appeared to have suffered from it as soon as he came in. He took something warm and retired, but did not rest well during the night. The next morning he had a violent pain in his back and shoulders, which he at first supposed to proceed from his throat; he found he should be unable

removed to Sheffield, her native place, where she conducted a ladies' seminary, her pupils being chiefly of the Society of Friends. Her mind becoming much concerned for the diffusion of education among the Africans, she acquired some knowledge of the language, in which she composed an elementary work. In 1821 she was so deeply impressed with its being a duty to labour for the instruction of African children that she gave up her school, and engaged in a mission to Sierra Leone in furtherance of that object. After returning to England, she left home to visit Africa a second time, and died at sea on the 31st March, 1832, having been the widow of Mr. Kilham for more than thirty-three years. She had a posthumous daughter born to Mr. Kilham, called Mary, who died in January, 1802.

to fulfil his appointment in the country that evening, and engaged a person to preach for him. A surgeon was afterwards sent for, who examined his throat, but could hardly believe, from appearances, that any bone was lodged there : he proceeded, however, to use the instrument which is commonly employed in such cases, and a very small bit of bone was brought up ; yet the pain in his back and shoulders increased that night to a very great degree ; and on the Friday morning it was so violent, that he compared it to the effects of boiling lead being poured on the part. Both the surgeon and himself now conceived the pain to be rheumatic, and on that account it was thought proper that he should be electrified, which was done on Friday at noon. From this operation he immediately experienced considerable relief. In the evening, he would have been electrified again, but the weather having become very damp, the machine could not be made to work properly. It was wished to perform the operation as he lay in bed, but not being able to effect this, he sat up in the bed for a while, and afterwards arose ; by this means he took fresh cold, and his pain returned, yet not with that violence which he had experienced in the morning. On Saturday evening he was electrified again, and found relief from it. A blister was also applied that night, from which he suffered a great deal, especially during the night, and on Sunday morning he appeared to be in a very weak state. In the course of his affliction he would ask me to pray by him, and though I suffered much in seeing his situation, I found the Lord near to help in time of trouble. When his pain was great, he would frequently call on the name of his Redeemer and his God, praying that, if consistent with his will, he might experience some relief ; but would add, ‘ Not my will, but thine be done.’ Part of the sabbath-day he appeared to sleep comfortably, and in the evening was much better ; the blister had taken a good deal of effect, and he thought it was of great use.— He observed to a friend this day, who asked him about his throat, that he believed it was quite healed ; it had been rather sore for a day or two after the bone was

taken out, but he said that now he did not feel any thing of it.\* He slept but little on the Sunday night, yet on Monday morning he appeared to be much better. He said his pain was nearly gone, but was much troubled with sickness at his stomach. He came down stairs that afternoon, but at night was very restless.

“On Tuesday morning he still appeared to be recovering, notwithstanding he had had so little sleep, yet his stomach remained sickly. This evening, after tea, Mr. and Mrs. Smith of Hanley being with us, and Mr. Smith’s weak state making it necessary for him to retire soon to rest, my husband proposed we should join in prayer; and he prayed with an enlargement of heart, with a depth of feeling, such as I had never known before. His soul indeed appeared to be deeply engaged with God, and his desires for the prosperity of our souls, for the good of the church, and for the world, more affectionate than ever. He expressed a profound and tender sense of the mercy of God, in that ‘he had not left us to wander in our sins.’ Oh! what did my soul feel while we were engaged in that solemn hour. My mind was powerfully impressed with the thought, that we who were present should soon be separated by death; but I did not apprehend that the Lord was going to call away my dear husband; I thought of Mr. Smith, who had that day been very ill.—Our dear child was so much struck with her father’s manner of praying, that when she went into the kitchen, she observed to the servant, that she had never heard him pray so before. This night he was more restless than ever. I do not know that he had five minutes’ good sleep during the night; notwithstanding this, he still appeared to be better on Wednesday, and went out.—The doctor this day took leave of him, supposing his presence to be no longer needful. In the evening, when we were alone, my husband made an observation, which led me to ask

\* An eminent surgeon gave it as his opinion, that since Mr. Kilham’s death was not till nearly a week after the lodgment of the bone, and the operation to extract it, the hemorrhage of which he died could not be attributed to that as a cause. It was, indeed, evident that he had recovered from it, when he was subsequently attacked in another form, for which there was no remedy.

him if he thought he should die soon? He answered, 'I am quite resigned either to life or death, whichever is the will of God.' I felt my mind much affected. I could not but shed tears while I asked him again, 'Do you think you shall recover?' He answered, 'I have no other apprehensions; I should like to live longer, if it be the will of God.' Brother Shore spent some time alone with him this evening, and was much profited by his conversation; he afterwards observed to a friend, that he thought he was in a very weak state, and that if he did recover, he would never be able to go through the labours which he had been accustomed to. There was a meeting of leaders and local preachers this evening, at which my husband was present different times; he prayed at the conclusion of the meeting, and several were much affected with a sense of the uncommon power he had in his prayer.\* He coughed a little this evening, and said he was not quite free from the pain in his back. He took some meat to supper, for the first time during his illness. When I asked him of his pain, he said he had been very comfortable since supper, and added, 'if I can only sleep, I shall do well;' but he was that night more restless than ever.

"On Thursday morning, about five o'clock, he complained much of restlessness; he said he would take some opium in the evening, observing that he could not live long, if sleep were not obtained. I wished to rise and endeavour to get something to make him sleep, but he would not suffer me, saying it would not take immediate effect if I got any thing; so he would try to compose himself without;—as it would only be two hours before he should rise, and he would get something in the evening. Between six and seven o'clock he started up saying, he could not bear to lie any

\* Considering the critical state of Mr. Kilham's health at this time, it is not improbable that his exercising in prayer on this occasion, at a public meeting—and, as appears, with more than usual energy—was the immediate cause of the rupture of the blood-vessel which was so quickly followed by death. He was so much debilitated and broken down, previously, that the slightest circumstance was sufficient to produce a crisis.

longer, it seemed as though a sword darted through his left breast, (he had complained of a pain in that breast all the week, sometimes dull, at others acute); he immediately spit and vomited blood. Mr. Taft was sent for, who bled him in the arm; he then returned to bed, that he might have hot trenchers applied to his back and breast, where he had much pain. Not having any thought of a blood vessel being broken, I hoped that the symptoms my husband had that morning experienced might be favourable, and that he would now be delivered from the sickness which had distressed him so much for the last few days. Yet I was much affected by the thought, that if an uncommonly sweet and heavenly frame of mind were to be considered as a sign of an approaching change, my dear husband would soon be called away. He said he was much relieved by the application of the trenchers, and I expressed my thankfulness to God with tears. About ten o'clock he vomited a much larger quantity of blood than before. I called to the girl to go for the doctor; she not being within hearing, I had to go out of the room for her. When I returned, my heart sunk within me at the sight of my husband; he had vomited again during my absence, and now appeared as though the hand of death was upon him. He saw my distress, and looking earnestly at me as I gave him some cold water, said, 'God is love, my dear.' The girl called in a neighbour; two friends also came in, and I said to them, 'he is dying.' The soul of my dear husband appeared to be engaged with God, as he said, 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.' In a short time I repeated, 'he is dying.' He answered, 'I am not dying, my dear, I am very easy.' In a little while the vomiting came on more violent than ever, and as soon as he was able to speak, he said, 'I am going to my Redeemer, I shall mount up with wings as eagles;' and again, 'If I am dying now, tell all the world that Jesus is precious.' His whole soul appeared to be filled with divine power while he spoke, and he added, 'he is working gloriously in my heart; glory be to God.' A



friend who was present said 'he would go for a physician : ' my husband answered, ' No ; no doctor ; I want none but Jesus Christ.' He went, however, soon after, and brought Dr. Storer ; who thought if the vomiting did not return immediately, my husband would recover. He prescribed a blister and some medicine, but by the time they arrived, my husband was too weak to have them applied. When we were distressed at the thought of his sufferings, we heard him say, ' As the afflictions of Christ abound, his consolations abound in my soul.' His life was now wasting away very fast ; he appeared sensible of it, and left a dying profession of his confidence in the goodness of a cause his heart had been engaged in : he said, ' What I have done in regard to the Methodist Connexion, so far from repenting, I rejoice in it at this moment.' When in a yet more exhausted state, he observed, ' Some may say this is a judgment upon me ; but what I have done in opposing the corruption in the church I believed my duty ; I bless God that he made me an instrument of doing it :—Oh, that I had done it more faithfully !' He gave some directions respecting his dear child, and expressed his wish that she might be brought up in the fear of the Lord. Mr. Sutton came in, and though my husband was too weak to speak out, he was so recollectful as to desire me to remind Mr. S. that a preacher should be provided for the chapel that evening. The last words he was heard to speak were, ' Lord Jesus, receive my spirit !' He then clasped his hands, and his soul appeared to be engaged with God. Soon after this, he turned towards me, and fixing his eyes upon me,\* I saw he was departing. My mind had till

\* The last look of a dying friend always lives in the memory of the survivor. Mrs. Kilham seems to have had a vivid recollection of the manner in which the eye of her husband was fixed upon her at the moment when he was departing, and she comforted or distressed herself according to the interpretation which she was led to put upon it. In a letter, she speaks on the subject as follows :—" Sometimes, after I had lost my husband, I suffered from the idea that he had almost forgotten me in his last hours ; and at other times I was much more distressed with the fear that he might feel too much concern about us [herself and daughter]. His dying look has dwelt upon my mind, and the fear, lest in that moment he felt compassion towards me that gave him pain, has

now been suspended between hope and despair, and I was silent; but now I began to speak to him;—I saw his faithful soul was going to his Redeemer; and, in the fulness of my heart, declared, ‘I would call on all the world never to seek happiness in any thing but God; I assured him, if a human being could have given happiness, he had given it to me. I would bring his dear child with me to heaven: I told him my heart was fast bound to her’s; we would join him again; we would fly to God for refuge; we would seek to glorify him; in him we should have peace.’ I continued speaking to him till I was sure he was dead, but could not tell the moment when he ceased to breathe.”

The christian fortitude and resignation of Mr. Kilham when on his death bed, and in his last moments, had the effect of sustaining the minds of all around him, especially of Mrs. Kilham, who was so much elevated, almost to extacy, by the glory which shone upon her departing husband, as to be forgetful of the loneliness which awaited herself. She afterwards felt, and bemoaned her loss in terms of the most affectionate regard for him; yet she murmured not, but acknowledged the severity of the dispensation to have been moderated by many mercies.

The remains of Mr. Kilham were interred in the chapel at Hockley,\* Nottingham, amongst a large concourse of spectators, the society and friends singing, as the corpse was being removed from his residence to the

been a source of suffering to me such as I cannot express. But whatever might be the case as to the exercises of his mind, that he was fully prepared to meet death cannot be doubted; and I remember with thankfulness the calm assurance with which he expressed his willingness to die, at a time when there was every reason to believe he would be continued with us; I mean the night before his death, when he appeared in a great measure freed from every complaint.”

\* Hockley chapel was then occupied by the Methodist New Connexion, having been brought over, at the separation, by a majority of trustees, &c.; but being one of the places which were afterwards litigated, it was eventually given up to the Old Connexion, according to a decision come to by arbitration. On the erection of another chapel, in Parliament-street, by the New Connexion, leave was granted for the removal of Mr. Kilham’s monument to that place of worship, where it is now erected. The remains of Mr. Kilham were not disturbed, but continued as originally deposited in Hockley chapel.

place of burial, the hymn in the Methodist Hymn Book beginning with,—“ Rejoice for a brother deceased,” &c. Within a short time afterwards, a handsome marble monument was erected by subscription to his memory, bearing the following inscription, into which it will be observed, some of the sentiments and dying expressions of Mr Kilham are incorporated:—

TO THE MEMORY OF  
ALEXANDER KILHAM,  
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL.

A FAITHFUL SERVANT IN THE VINEYARD OF CHRIST,  
A ZEALOUS DEFENDER OF THE RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE,  
AGAINST ATTEMPTS TO FORCE ON THEM  
A PRIESTLY DOMINATION.

DESERTED BY MANY OF HIS FRIENDS,  
HE LIVED TO SEE THE CAUSE FLOURISH  
IN WHICH HE DIED A MARTYR.

IN PROMOTING THE GLORY OF GOD  
AND THE HAPPINESS OF HIS BRETHREN,  
HE COUNTED NOTHING TOO DEAR A SACRIFICE :  
IN THIS PURSUIT,  
EASE AND INDULGENCE WERE DESPISED BY HIM.

HIS LAST HOURS  
WERE PEACEFUL AND TRIUMPHANT,  
UNEMBITTERED BY A MOMENT'S REPENTANCE  
FOR HAVING OPPOSED CORRUPTION IN THE CHURCH ;  
HE BLESSED GOD  
THAT HE HAD MADE HIM INSTRUMENTAL IN DOING IT.  
AND ONLY REGRETTED  
THAT HE HAD NOT DONE IT MORE FAITHFULLY.

COMMITTING HIS SOUL TO HIS REDEEMER,  
HE TOOK HIS FLIGHT TO A BETTER WORLD,  
DECEMBER 20TH, 1798,  
AGED 36.

It will easily be conceived, that the sensation naturally produced among the Methodists by Mr. Kilham's death was very great—greater, indeed, than had been witnessed on the death of any one connected with the body since the demise of Mr. Wesley. The members of his own community were distressed beyond measure at the loss they had sustained, by the removal of one, to whom they had looked up more than to any other individual, for assistance under the difficulties which surrounded them; and so confidently was Mr. Kilham regarded by the other party as the main support of the New Connexion, that, on his death, it began immediately to be predicted the cause would soon come to an end. Nay, further; his being so suddenly taken away was spoken of as a special act of Providence, to show his displeasure at those who had seceded from the old Conference. The language, used on the subject, in some cases, was exceedingly strong. It is remembered that Mr. Grundell used to repeat several instances, of preachers and others, from whom Mr. Kilham had differed, having expressed themselves on his death in terms which could hardly be softened down so as to be regarded as bearing even an equivocal meaning respecting his condition in the future life. In one pulpit, for example, he was alluded to as having gone to "his own place;" and, to fix the impression that his death was a divine judgment upon him, it was described generally as occurring under most awful circumstances, from a bone sticking in his throat—by which many understood him to have been actually choked. Whereas the accident respecting the bone happened before his serious illness, and was, in fact, completely cured; so that, strictly speaking, it had no more to do with his death than any other event which took place previously. This is proved by the testimony of his medical attendant, of Mrs. Kilham, and of individuals who had intercourse with him at the time. But while noticing the uncharitable conduct of those who misrepresented Mr. Kilham in his death, we ought not to omit mentioning that there were others, still in the Wesleyan body, who had known him, and though they

did not concur in all his views, they had the Christian feeling and candour to speak of him as they thought his character deserved, especially at his decease. The writer regrets much that the exact words have escaped his memory, which a friend told him, some years ago, Mr. Bramwell had used on first hearing of Mr. Kilham's unexpected and sudden death; but he perfectly recollects they were to the effect, that whatever might be said of some of Mr Kilham's principles and proceedings, in christian piety he had few equals, and as an honest, straight-forward man he had not left any superior behind him. Mr. Bramwell was himself eminently spiritually-minded; and having been well acquainted with Mr. Kilham, he was very competent, so far as one man can be the judge of another man's state, to form an opinion of his heart and character. We consider, therefore, the testimony of Mr. Bramwell, spontaneously bursting from his lips, as it did, when the tidings reached him of Mr. Kilham's death, as equally honourable to him who gave it, and to the memory of him in whose behalf it was rendered.

Certainly, if a magnanimous and happy death were allowed to be conclusive evidence of a just cause, and of sincerity in him who had supported it, the circumstances and peace of mind in which Mr. Kilham departed, would not allow a doubt to remain on the subject. It is admitted, however, that the soundness of particular principles must be tested by other means than the frame of mind, or the individual feelings, of their advocates; yet when we find, in Mr. Kilham's case, that his death was first attributed to a wrong cause, and then interpreted so as to make it believed that the Divine Being had thereby signified his displeasure at the part he had taken in the Methodist Connexion,—we are called upon to recite his fearlessness, his resignation either to live or die, just as it might please God, his tranquillity, his confidence of being taken to heaven, and lastly, his dying avowal that what he had done in promoting reform was not a source of regret but of glorying in that solemn hour, except that he had not done it more faithfully;—these things, we say, ought

to be prominently put forth, if not to establish the truth of Mr. Kilham's system, to counteract the allegations of his adversaries, at least, and to show that they had no authority for pronouncing him to have been in error, from any thing which transpired in connection with his death. A more triumphant departure out of this life into the eternal world, has seldom been recorded ; and if it prove any thing, in reference to his principles, it is, that they were founded in truth, and maintained by him in righteousness to the end of his days.

It is deserving of notice, that amidst all the odium which was attempted to be thrown on Mr. Kilham, the goodness of his moral character was never questioned before his expulsion. When his trial was about to take place in London, since many things had been said against him, after writing the Progress of Liberty, and said, too, in such general and sweeping terms that it was impossible to know exactly what was meant, the idea occurred to Mr. Kilham, that it might be expedient to procure testimonials from the different circuits in which he had laboured, respecting his demeanour as a Christian minister,—to be a protection, in case the Conference should accuse him in regard to it. He was led to think of this step from not having had the charges, which were intended to be brought against him, specified, which prevented him from preparing a proper defence; and therefore he had no alternative but to fortify himself at every point, and in any way which he could think of. This precaution was, however, deemed on all hands to be unnecessary, it being admitted that his personal moral conduct had been, not only unexceptionable, but exemplary ; so much so, that even the most inveterate of his opponents could have no pretext for impugning it in any part. He was, consequently, dissuaded from adopting this course in reference to his general life. On his trial in London, not a word was uttered tending to throw a doubt on his sincerity or consistency as a christian ; and, at the conclusion of it, when he was about to be cut off, Mr. Kilham reminded the Conference that no charge had been preferred against his moral character. This was to show that he had been

condemned on other grounds, and in effect he challenged them to criminate him in that respect, if they could;—but they did not, even then, accuse him, which proves they were unable to do so. Yet after his rejection, an attempt was made to fix on him something which was intended to impeach the integrity of his motives; and as it was, doubtless, the most that could be said for the purpose of making out a case against him, it ought not to pass without observation.

In a pamphlet entitled “A Defence of the Conduct of Conference in the Expulsion of Alexander Kilham,” published by Messrs. Mather, Pawson, and Benson, and addressed to the Connexion, in order to abate the ferment which had been caused by what the Conference had done, it is said,—

“Some of you, however, are of opinion, that he is sincere, and means well in all the steps he has taken, having no intention of making a division among the people. We confess, we thought so ourselves till lately, and therefore have been the less severe upon him. But we now see cause to alter our judgment, and that for the following reasons:—1. If he be sincere, and believe himself what he publishes to the world, respecting the corruption, oppression, and tyrannical nature of our plan, and the dishonesty and knavery of our conduct, why does he seek so earnestly to labour in connexion with us, &c. 2. If he mean well, and have no intention to make a division in the societies, why does he use such art to render himself popular, and attach a party to himself, and that among the trustees and preachers, as well as people, not in the least regarding the strife, contention, and subsequent convulsion this may make in the societies? That he may induce the people to favour him, he compliments them on their good sense, and tells them, ‘It is their cause he is pleading, and that on that account he is expelled, &c.’ His judgment of the trustees and of their power, you are, some of you at least, no strangers to, &c. What business had he, a young, unexperienced stripling, to meddle either with the trustees at Bristol, or in London,” &c.

Here, then, we have the considerations which induced these individuals to alter their opinion of Mr. Kilham, as to his intentions and his sincerity in what he had done. They say, in substance, that they had

once thought him a good but misled man, but afterwards they judged differently of him ; and, fortunately, as they give reasons for this change of sentiment, their validity can be enquired into. Mr. Kilham answered these statements when they were first made ; and it is proper to adduce what he says in reply. He observes,—(1.) “I have not represented the preachers in general, in the horrid light this passage holds out ; that is, as a ‘set of knaves and tyrants.’” Here he took away the premises on which they had founded their accusation against him, and they were at issue as to the fact of his having represented the preachers as they described. Mr. Kilham was correct in his denial of the charge—he had never spoken of the preachers as being knaves : the fact was, these brethren had chosen, for the purpose of implicating him, to construe some of Mr. Kilham’s animadversions, referring to individual cases and persons, into general accusations ; and then, by substituting or adding\* exaggerating terms of their own (for he had not used any such epithets as they ascribed to him), they endeavoured to make it appear that he had condemned them in the mass. He had assured the Conference that he highly estimated the great body of the preachers, and that nothing could be further from his intention than to render them disreputable with the public. He repudiated the version which Conference had given of what he had written, and wished them to adhere to his words, and not to introduce terms of their own for them : this he protested against ; yet it was persevered in ; and after he had been expelled, these three preachers came forward, and attempted to justify their

\* It was by this practice, in a great degree, that some of the senior preachers succeeded in inflaming the minds of others against Mr. Kilham. They sometimes misquoted him, or detached incomplete sentences or paragraphs from his writings, omitting what would have qualified or explained his meaning ; and they even interpolated words of their own, and then, after magnifying what he had said, they made him answerable, not only for his own terms, but for their construction of them, and also for others which they introduced. On his trial, an unwarrantable instance of this kind occurred (see page 276), which gave an offensive character to a passage which it was not intended to bear, and which it would not have borne, had no such addition been made by his accusers.



change of opinion respecting Mr. Kilham, by attributing to him words and phrases which he had not employed. (2.) As to his desire to labour with them proving any inconsistency or insincerity in him, he evinced that it did no such thing; because this willingness was connected with a determination to promote reform in the system. He might, indeed, have continued in the Connexion, if he would have foregone his attempts to effect changes; but he refused all offers which would prohibit him from correcting abuses or from advocating just principles. This shews that he was not willing to labour with them unconditionally—which is the impression calculated to be made on the mind by reading the passage as worded in the defence of Conference. (3.) Mr. Kilham is spoken of as having used art to render himself popular, and to unite a party to himself, by representing the cause in which he was engaged as the cause of the Methodists generally. How he could have spoken of it otherwise, it is difficult to comprehend. Mr. Kilham contended for the ordinance of the Lord's Supper being administered to the societies—was not this their cause? Also, that the lay members of the Connexion ought to be admitted to associate with the preachers in making laws and governing the body—was not this their cause too? Then it may be asked, wherein consisted Mr. Kilham's "art," in speaking as he had done, of the work in which he had laboured? But (4.) let us leave matters of opinion, and notice a fact or two, for the purpose of judging how far the writers were under the influence of prejudice, and whether there were sufficient grounds for charging Mr. Kilham with insincerity and bad motives. They mention him as a "young unexperienced stripling,"\* who had no "business to meddle with the trustees at Bristol." If this be a fair specimen of the recklessness of Mr. Kilham's opponents in the use of language, when

\* There was the less excuse for thus describing Mr. Kilham, inasmuch as it was equally inapplicable to his appearance and to his years: he was rather above than below the middle size, and manly in his features and demeanour; so that there was nothing about him to justify the term "stripling" being applied to him.

referring to him, very little authority indeed ought to be attached to their assertions when animadverting on his conduct. For instance, Mr. Kilham was upwards of thirty-two-years of age when he "meddled" with the Bristol trustees; yet these brethren describe him as a "stripling." He had been employed ten years as a regular minister of the Gospel, when they pronounced him "unexperienced;" and it was because the Bristol trustees had excluded a preacher from the pulpit, for assisting in administering the Sacrament, that Mr. Kilham wrote a short pamphlet against their conduct; yet it is asked what "business" he had to "meddle," &c. Now these are particulars, in which there is nothing to be conjectured—all were plain facts, well known to the parties—who, notwithstanding, were so much biassed against Mr. Kilham, that, when he was a man, arrived at nearly middle age, they could designate him a youth and a stripling; when he had been a fellow-labourer with them for ten years,—he was said to be without experience; and, though a minister of Jesus Christ of such standing in the Church, on a number of trustees at Bristol uniting to deprive the society of the Sacrament, and to exclude a brother preacher from the pulpit, it is represented as impertinent in him to interfere, by showing the wrong which had been done. How these gentlemen—who, while sitting as judges on Mr. Kilham's writings, had taken hold of some of his expressions in the manner they did, aggravating their signification beyond the intended meaning, and tying him down most rigidly to the literal sense,—could so far forget their own rules of construction, as to use such language respecting him, is astonishing; it demonstrates how greatly they were misled by their excited feelings, and the necessity there is that the severe things which they said should be received with caution, and allowance made for that licence which they assuredly took with words, when they spoke of one who had offended them. The truth is, a few of the senior preachers had anticipated that, on the death of Mr. Wesley, they should be allowed in every thing to have their own way in the Connexion; and on being opposed,

they became petulant and unmeasured in their censures of those who were the means of thwarting them. Mr. Kilham, by advocating the Sacrament and a division of power with the laity, had incurred their displeasure, and they did not hesitate to denounce him as an enemy to the work of God. He fell before their authority at the Conference; but the sentence pronounced upon him by that tribunal was by no means final as to his christian character; nor yet are the opinions expressed afterwards, by those who were interested in his condemnation and disgrace, entitled to much weight; particularly when they are found connected with such glaring instances of misrepresentation as those which have just been noticed. The personal history of Mr. Kilham, as given in this volume—and this opportunity is embraced of avowing, that the truth has been strictly and conscientiously adhered to in the narrative—both respecting his experience and conduct, leaves not a reasonable doubt as to his integrity and moral worth. That he was a good man—infallible, and free from error, we do not say—we think his life has afforded as strong and decisive evidence as can be expected to be found in a mortal. And this conviction is, if possible, strengthened by the consideration, that he was watched and proved at every point,—and there were not wanting those who would magnify his infirmities into crimes, while his excellencies were attempted to be obscured, and even bad motives attributed to him, when the worthiness of the actions themselves could not be disputed.

The character frequently given of Mr. Kilham has been, that he was a disturber of the peace of a Christian society; and this general representation of him, when unaccompanied by correct information as to the nature of the disturbance which he made, and its causes, has necessarily produced an unfavourable impression as to his temper and purpose. To unsettle the members of a church, is of itself an evil; and if there be not a just occasion for it—viz., some error to be removed, or some neglected good to be obtained—it should be deprecated as injurious to the interests of religion. But when circumstances are such as render it a duty to pro-

mote particular measures for the advantage of a community, those who engage therein are warranted in so doing; and if they be opposed by others, the parties standing in the way of improvement should bear the blame, if there be an interruption of peace and harmony. The welfare and purity of the church must be secured at all events: and should the attainment of these be the accidental cause of contention, as is too frequently the case in this world, still they must not be neglected. If the mere circumstance that some opposition and commotion would follow, were allowed to be a sufficient reason for desisting, then there would be an end to all reformation. Our Lord and his Apostles disturbed the Jews; the Protestant reformers disturbed the church of Rome; Mr. Wesley disturbed the church of England; and there have never been any improvements sought to be effected, be they ever so great, but some have been found to object, and disturbances have been the consequence. Now the principal question to be resolved in Mr. Kilham's case, is—did he create agitation without just cause? And in order to ascertain this, let the two particular measures which he advocated be kept in mind—which were, first, the administration of the Lord's Supper, and, second, the admission of the lay members of Methodism to Conference, as a means of correcting existing abuses, and to prevent their future recurrence. That he was right in regard to the first of these, is now admitted even by the Wesleyan body itself, which has established what Mr. Kilham contended for—the Sacrament—in its fullest extent; and with regard to the second, which the Wesleyans have not yet adopted, it may be remarked, that while only about five thousand persons had embraced it at Mr. Kilham's death, there are now at least one hundred thousand in the United Kingdom\* who have preferred it to the system which he

\* The members of society in the Methodist New Connexion are upwards of 20,000; the Wesleyan Association has about the same number; and the Primitive Methodists have 60,000 members,—making, altogether, 100,000. These three communities, though differing from each other in some particular details as to church government, are all

opposed, and which excludes the laity from Conference; which proves, that as time advances, and greater light is given, the stronger disposition there is to concur in and adopt Mr. Kilham's principles.

There was nothing in Mr. Kilham which was even akin to what is generally denominated selfishness. Few public characters have been so entirely free from this taint, as he was. He had no bye-ends of his own to serve in what he did. His heart was set on placing the government of the Methodist Connexion on a constitutional foundation, and he was willing to be nothing himself, if he could only succeed in that one object. Such was his profession,—and he never performed an action which might justly cause his sincerity or singleness of purpose to be suspected. Numberless instances could be given of his disregard of himself, which was manifested on every occasion; more especially when arrangements were being made for negotiating with the Conference at Leeds, in 1797, and his friends wished one condition of peace to be, that Mr. Kilham should be restored by the Conference to his former position as a preacher. But he would not hear of such a proposal as a term of union; and was not only content, but determined, to be lost sight of, and to leave them free to act, without the least regard to his feelings or interests. In this he did what not one in ten thousand would have done in his circumstances; but it was only an individual proof, among many, of his devotion to the good of others, without thinking of his own.

One circumstance has made a strong impression on the mind of the writer of these memoirs, in favour of Mr. Kilham's veracity, which it would be unpardonable not to mention. It is this,—after examining, with great attention, his correspondence and private memoranda, and comparing these with his public professions and

agreed in the great principle which constituted the foundation of Mr. Kilham's system,—the associating of the laity with the preachers in all meetings held to legislate for, and to govern the general body. This fact shows that the cause for which Mr. Kilham was tried and condemned has greatly prospered, the friends of constitutional Methodism in the United Kingdom having increased at least twenty-fold since 1797.

writings—he can say that he has found the most perfect agreement between what he did or said before the world, and the materials and notes in his own possession. Not a sentence, nor even a word, has exhibited either a contradiction or a discrepancy; which establishes his character for speaking the truth according to his knowledge and belief. It ought also to be stated, in extenuation of what has been admitted by his friends as Mr. Kilham's principal fault, (which he regretted himself, and asked pardon for of the Conference which expelled him) that, when he used the harshest language in his writings, and was the most personal in his attacks, it was at the instigation and request of others. His own disposition was mild and kind almost in the extreme; and it has been repeatedly observed, by those who knew and enjoyed intercourse with him, that his benevolence and good nature were in contrast with some parts of his publications; which they were at a loss to account for. The above is the explanation. His animadversions on Mr. Mather were the result of Mr. Edmondson's advice, as already stated (see page 191); and, as appears from the correspondence of other preachers, he was furnished by them with information on different topics, and regarding particular individuals, which they urged him to make use of according to their suggestions. He did so, and by this means he was led to say many bitter things, in the belief not only that they were true, but, also, that, as soft words had proved ineffectual to the correction of existing evils, stronger observations, even if made at the expense of personal feeling, would serve a salutary purpose. In the simplicity of his heart, he had no doubt that those would have stood by him, whatever might be the consequences, who had given him hints and materials, and who,—excusing themselves from performing the task, on the ground that they had neither the courage nor the ability which he possessed,—pressed it upon him as a duty, faithfully to reprove what was improper. Here he miscalculated;—they were not to be found, or had made their peace with his adversaries, when the day of trial came to him,—for having done what they had so strenuously recommended!

Mr. Kilham was too confiding : which subjected him to the charge of not having sometimes acted with that caution, which a greater degree of prudence would have suggested. There is certainly much propriety in this view of his disposition ; but it implies only that he had a relative failing—namely, that he gave particular persons more credit for being truthful and firm, than they deserved to have. It is characteristic of such candid and sincere minds as Mr. Kilham's was, to be without suspicion respecting the integrity or stability of others ; and this led to an overrating of their virtues in too many cases ; but had they been as sound in principle, and as consistent in their proceedings, as they ought to have been, and as he expected them to be,—trusting them, as he did, would not have appeared in the end as unwise, nor have laid him open to the above accusation. Had he been more jealous, or had they been more consistent, no such reflection would have fallen on him.

Every qualification for making a good soldier was found in Mr. Kilham, yet he wanted some things essential to a general. He had courage and perseverance, with a disregard of suffering, to fit him for any undertaking ; but he was sometimes too direct and open in his movements to succeed well. Whatever honesty and faithfulness could do, he was competent to achieve, but he had no cunning, and knew nothing of circuitous paths to compass an object indirectly ; nor had he the art of marshaling his strength so as to assume the most formidable appearance, or act to the greatest advantage. His opponents were vastly his superiors in policy and contrivance. If he had been possessed of a greater degree of worldly sagacity, he would have been careful that those who thrust him into the front of the battle, should not have had such facilities as they possessed for running away, or hiding themselves, while he was maintaining the conflict almost alone.

The talents and knowledge of Mr. Kilham have been much underrated, in consequence of being depreciated by those who endeavoured disparage him in every possible way. But even if all that he has written were lost, the mere circumstance of one, who died soon after

he had completed his thirty-sixth year, and who had no advantages connected with birth or education,—having acquired so much influence as he had in the Methodist community, is alone sufficient evidence that he was not an ordinary man. His acquaintance with theology was extensive, embracing ecclesiastical history as well as doctrinal subjects; this progress may be attributed to his thirst for information, his laboriousness in seeking it, his natural aptness to learn, and a good memory. He scarcely forgot any thing, and consequently his knowledge accumulated constantly, as every new acquisition was so much added to his former stock. He was also in the habit of writing down both his own thoughts and the thoughts of others, which greatly assisted him in retaining them. The mechanical operation of using his pen, was to him rather an agreeable employment, which is not the case with the generality of persons; and he wrote with such ease and facility, that his sentiments appeared almost spontaneously to be transcribed on paper, without requiring those additional efforts to render them tangible which others are obliged to bestow. Several who remember Mr. Kilham, have mentioned, that, when pressed for time, as he often was, it was no uncommon practice with him to be writing letters while taking his part in conversation, in a company of several persons, who did not appear either to incommode him by their presence, or to intercept his flow of ideas, if speaking on topics different from those on which he happened to be treating.

As a disputant, he possessed many advantages. His perceptions were clear, and he could analyze what was said by his opponents, and separate truth from error, with great facility. His powers of satire were also considerable, which he sometimes used to the great provocation of those who were the subjects of his remarks. These qualifications, and the readiness of his replies, might well make him formidable to those who took the opposite side of a question, to whom he was more than equal on almost every subject which he contested.

With regard to the published compositions of Mr. Kilham,—as they were written in haste, and amidst a



variety of engagements, which precluded him from bestowing more labour upon them than was necessary to render them intelligible, and efficient for their intended purpose, the value of them is not to be determined by their beauties of style or literary accuracy, but rather according to the information they afford, and the effect produced by them in the promotion of reform among the Methodists. The natural current of his thoughts, and the freedom and energy with which he expressed himself, gave much interest to his pieces, which they retain even now, though many of the topics have become obsolete. He was one of those authors who seem to think aloud, and whose works take hold of the reader by affording such a picture of the writer's own heart, that all whom he addresses seem to be taken unreservedly into his confidence. If Mr. Kilham had survived the stormy period in which he lived, so that his mind could have been more fully devoted to study, it is probable he might have produced something which would have associated his name with those of the eminent divines who have done honour to the Christian name.

Mr. Kilham's preaching was plain and evangelical, —his aim being, in the first place, to render the plan of redemption, as revealed in the Gospel, understood by all; and in the second, to prevail upon his hearers to believe in, and to embrace the truth, in order to their salvation. He had nothing violent in his manner; yet was most earnest in his appeals to the conscience: and the pathos with which he preached, and the deep feeling evinced by his own mind that the truths he delivered were all-important to the eternal interests of mankind, contributed to give effect to his discourses, and rendered him popular wherever he laboured; so that his friends had not greater cause for sorrow at his early death, than the church had for mourning the loss of an affectionate and faithful minister of the Gospel.

THE END.

